

THE CARLETON Miscellany

Our Summer-Reading Fiesta? Feast? Fiction-O-Rama?

- **STORIES** By Wayne Carver, Gerald Guidera, James B. Hall, Gunilla B. Norris
Also two excerpts from a longer fiction by John Pauker.
- **LETTERS FROM ROME** (an Evening with Ezra Pound), **KENTUCKY AND A GRAD SCHOOL**
- **THE QUARTER'S EPIC** By Irving Feldman
Other poems by William Jay Smith, Donald Hall, Constance Urdang, Robert Sward, Henry Birnbaum, Harold Witt, David Cornell DeJong and Thomas Whitbread.
- **THREE FRENCH CLASSICS OF BLACK HUMOR**
Translations and Commentary by Scott Bates.

Fiction-and-Essay Contest Delayed—see page 4

SUMMER 1960 90c



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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

THOMAS WHITBREAD teaches at the University of Texas.

ROBERT SWARD, recently in residence at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, comes from Maine.

JOHN LUCAS, SCOTT BATES, WAYNE BOOTH, HAROLD WITT (who will soon have a book of poems published in the Macmillan Paperback series), JAMES B. HALL, PETER BRAND and ERNEST LEVERETT have previously appeared in *The Carleton Miscellany*. So has JOHN PAUKER, who is represented here by two excerpts from a longer fiction of his, entitled *The Book*.

GUNILLA B. MORRIS is a student at Sarah Lawrence, studying writing with Horace Gregory.

DAVID YOUNG, a Carleton graduate, declines to say which graduate school he goes to.

IRVING FELDMAN teaches at Kenyon College. His epic, printed in this issue, was written in 1955. He revised it this year, and then an editor of *Miscellany* revised it (tentatively) further. The editor's revision provoked the following comment from Mr. Feldman, for which we are grateful: "I hope, by the way,

that you will permit me to thank you for your labors publicly, say, in the Notes on Contributors, for doing so much and so well by this poem. Perhaps such a notice might even serve as an admonition to the general run of magazine editors who look on their job as a simple matter of exercising their taste and no more. Our literary magazines would surely be livelier if their editors abandoned the silly and hamstringing romantic idea that the writer is a unique creator, that he has a unique proprietorship over his poem, etc., that he is a *Petcel*." This comment in turn provokes (for we are easily provoked) the following editorial. We agree with Mr. Feldman about the function of editors, and we do undertake to suggest revisions to our contributors. We have, however, learned from past experience that (a) our judgment in such cases is not perfect, (b) many writers readily take offense at our suggestions, and (c) it's a complicated business. So, though we will probably continue to edit manuscripts we wish to print (and to hope for the kind of success Mr. Feldman thinks we have perpetrated), we want prospective contributors to know that we do so with full measure of humility, and that we make no changes without the writer's approval.

WILLIAM JAY SMITH lives in Vermont, is the author of *Cele-*

bration at Dark, two collections of children's poems, and a volume of his collected poems, entitled *Poems 1947-1957* published by Atlantic-Little Brown.

DONALD HALL won the 1955 Lamont Poetry Prize for his *Exiles and Marriages*. A more recent volume is entitled *The Dark Houses*. A teacher at the University of Michigan, he is on a Fulbright in England this year.

CONSTANCE URDANG, an old contributor to *Furioso* and an assistant editor of the old *Western Review*, is presently at Bard College (for a discussion of this creative use of the word "presently," see Department of American, second issue).

HENRY BIRNBAUM's work has appeared in many magazines, perhaps most recently in *Poetry* (February, 1960). He lives in Maryland.

DAVID CORNEL DE JONG, of Providence, R.I., "is the author of many books, including three books of verse, nine novels, a collection of stories, an autobiography, and translations from the Dutch and Flemish. He was born in the Netherlands." (This data cribbed from the contributors' notes of *Poetry*, for which our thanks).

OWEN JENKINS and RICHARD STANG are of the Carleton English Department.

GERALD GUIDERA, recently of Hofstra College, is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota.

A FEW PRINCIPLES IN SMALL PRINT

An editor has a very limited control over what he prints unless he prints only himself or manages, like Mr. Luce, to persuade his writers to think and write as he does. Mr. Luce's practices are not only impractical for an editor without the resources and impulses of Mr. Luce, but they are also unethical, at least unethical for an editor who believes in the right of the poet, scholar, critic or what-not to be his own man. Since most editors of small magazines like this one cherish that right, such editors disapprove of Mr. Luce and cite him, as I seem to be doing, as one of the horrors of our age.

The citations are by now, however, a bit tiresome. They are also misleading since they suggest that a little magazine edited by some free editorial spirit will not be, like *Time*, a den of conformity. A quick look at most of our little magazines should disprove the suggestion. Little magazines are mostly made in the image of their editors even as Mr. Luce's magazines are, if only because the editors accept what they like, know or can get. Though the editors may never change a word in their contributor's work, they will simply not have (or have long) as a contributor a wholly alien spirit. So where is all this freedom?—it is

(Continued on page 112)

FICTION-AND-ESSAY CONTEST POSTPONED

New deadline, September 10, 1960. We apologize for our inability to announce winners in this issue. We decided to postpone decision rather than to award no prize in at least one of the categories. Stories and essays printed in either the Spring issue or this issue are still eligible for the prizes. We reprint the rules of the contest below.

THE EDITORS OF *THE CARLETON MISCELLANY* ANNOUNCE TWO PRIZES OF \$250 EACH FOR THE BEST STORY AND THE BEST ESSAY SUBMITTED TO *THE CARLETON MISCELLANY* BY SEPTEMBER 10, 1960.

(1) The words "essay" and "story" are not defined by the rules of the contest, except that (a) eligible manuscripts may not be more than 7,500 words in length, and (b) the judges may decide in each instance whether the story submitted is a story, the essay an essay.

(2) The judges are the editors of *The Carleton Miscellany*. They will award one prize for an essay, and one prize for a story, unless no manuscript meets what they have fixed in their minds as the minimal requirements for a prize-winning story or essay, in which case no prize(s) will be awarded.

(3) Essays and stories must be written in English. They must be typed, and they must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. No manuscript which has been published previously in any form is eligible.

(4) *The Carleton Miscellany* will print the prize-winning story and essay, and reserves the right, having copyrighted them, to reprint them (for a reasonable fee) in any anthology it may publish.

(5) The editors of *The Carleton Miscellany* reserve the right to print at their usual rate manuscripts which do not win either prize but which they deem suitable for publication.

(6) *The Carleton Miscellany* will not be responsible for losses of manuscripts or delays in their return.



THREE FRENCH CLASSICS OF BLACK HUMOR

By SCOTT BATES

French black humor or *black bile* has lately come to the attention of our hemisphere through a rather belated interest in some of our own black humorists, writers like, say, Kenneth Patchen, Kenneth Rexroth, and Henry Miller. In France, humorous attitudes similar to the ones held by these authors have been kicking around since the Revolution, and it may well be that our relatively new-found consciousness of them is due in large part to the triple influence of our writers, the atom bomb, and translations from the Europeans. Poets like Henri Michaux and Jacques Prévert, playwrights and novelists like Sartre and Ionesco, Genêt and Beckett create their brand of humor out of a very solid literary tradition; so that by now in France, *humour noir*—like its Mephistophelean traveling companion *anti-littérature*—has almost reached the stature of a literary genre.

A definitive definition of black humor is out of the question, but a few general approximations of one can be made. Frederick J. Hoffman in *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* describes it as "the irrational laughter which the poet expresses when he is aware of the violent incongruities of unconscious reality." Many modern French poets refer to it simply as "humour" or "humour poétique" and ring it about with poetic definition:

- Humor is the last cigarette. (Irène Hamoir)
Humor is a sinister destruction of the conventional vision of the world. (Jacques-Henri Lèvesque)
Humor is not of our world. (Jean Cocteau)
Humor is the guillotine's slicing blade on a cold November morning. (Pierre de Massot)
Humor is the etiquette of despair. (Chris Marker)
Humor is the smile of revolt. (André Miguel)
Humor is the only authorized form of the passionate crime, followed by suicide. (Georges Neveux)
Humor is the cannibalism of vegetarians. (Francis Picabia)
Humor is the only bearable way of being serious. (Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes)
Humor is still to believe in humor. (Pierre Seghers)

But this sounds like cruel or *sick* humor, you observe, typically collegiate, sophomoric, and *beat*. Have you heard the latest . . . ? No, say its French perpetrators, it is *you* who are sick, if not dead; this humor is alive, it is *engagé*, ferocious, bored, pure, childish, funereal, subconsciously transcendent, virtuous, rebellious (*révolté*), lyrical, mystical, destructive, beautiful and absolutely *hors de ce monde* when it is not violently attacking *ce monde*. And they cite as its classic example a passage they all know by heart, the description of the sixteen-year-old Melvyn in Lautréamont's *Maldoror* (1869):

He is as handsome as the retractibility of the claws of birds of prey; or again, as the uncertainty of the muscular movements of wounds in the soft parts of the posterior cervical region; or rather as the perpetual rat-trap, re-set each time by the trapped animal, that can catch rodents indefinitely and works even when hidden beneath straw; and especially as the fortuitous encounter upon a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella. (Canto VI)

(One present-day French poet's definition of humor: The fortuitous encounter on a dissecting table of a surgeon and a patient.) Or they may cite André Breton's joke of 1928:

I have been told [relates Breton] such a stupid, such a somber, such a moving story! One day a gentleman arrives in a hotel and asks for a room. He is given number 35. Returning to the desk a few minutes later, he turns in his key and remarks, "Excuse me, I have a dreadful memory. If you don't mind, each time I return to the hotel I shall give you my name, Monsieur Delouit [Breton adds that he is not sure of the spelling]. And each time *you* will remind me of the number of my room." "Certainly, sir." A little later he enters, stops at the desk. "Monsieur Delouit." "Number 35." "Thank you very much." A minute later someone rushes up to the desk, tremendously agitated, his clothes covered with mud, his bloody face hardly recognizable as human. "Monsieur Delouit." "What, sir, Monsieur Delouit has just gone up to his room." "Excuse me, I am Monsieur Delouit, I have just fallen from my window; the number of my room, please?" (*Nadja*)

Negatively, then, black-humor is anti-social, if not asocial; positively—when it has a positive side—it is pro-social-minority, and posits an anti-social norm of poetic adventure (exoticism-eroticism), absolute freedom, and the ethics of Rimbaud's *real life*, which happens to be *elsewhere*. Reversing Aristotle, the laughter rises superior to the average man by laughing at *him*: the tragic, passionate clown on the stage splits with laughter at the audience, those nauseating, detached and *paying* customers. The spectator's prosaic, hypocritical norm is here the comic aberration, the inhuman mechanism (Bergson), the savage inhibitionism (Freud).

The principal French classics of black humor are the works of the Marquis de Sade, especially *Justine* and *Juliette*; Lautréamont's *Songs of Maldoror*; Rimbaud's *Un coeur sous un soutane*; Alfred Jarry's *Ubu roi* and *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll*; Gide's *Les Caves du Vatican* (*Lafcadio's Adventures*); Apollinaire's *Les Onze Mille Verges* and *Le Poète assassiné*; and short prose pieces, letters, and poems by authors and anti-authors as diverse as Tristan Corbière, Jacques Vaché, and Marcel Duchamp. The three poems I have translated here to represent this

curious body of literature are all in André Breton's somewhat eccentric anthology of black humor (1950) and may be considered as minor classics of the genre. The first one, Forneret's "Poor Unfortunate," is known mainly through its inclusion in the Breton work; the other two, Cros' "Kippered Herring" and Jarry's "Debraining Song" have been widely known in France since their first appearance there. All three are of the nineteenth century when the humor was relatively more original and less self-conscious than that of the moderns.

A few notes on the poets:

XAVIER FORNERET (1810-85) was a wealthy Dijonnais who styled himself *Phomme noir* and was known by his fellow Burgundians as a solitary eccentric who wrote bizarre books published in several colors of large type often with no more than three or four words on a page. His aphorisms, collected under the title *Untitled*, were surrealistic before the letter; examples: "One can walk without a head"; "There is no 1 truer than a 2 which makes 3"; "I have seen a mail box on a cemetery"; etc.

CHARLES CROS (1842-88) wrote a charming but now slightly faded work of symbolist poetry, *The Sandalwood Coffin* (1873) which is remembered chiefly for the poem translated here, "The Kippered Herring." Educated completely by his philosopher father, Cros was a distinguished oriental scholar at the age of fourteen; an important scientist at nineteen; a lively bohemian friend of Rimbaud and Verlaine whose poetry he influenced; the French originator of the monologue as a literary genre; and the founder of the *Zutistes* (the *Phooey-to-youers*), a group of anti-bourgeois poets. As a scientist, he invented color photography and the phonograph (the latter nine months before Edison) but had no money to get his inventions on the market. He died in poverty at the age of forty-five, worn-out, as his brother put it, from the terrible weariness of crying in the wilderness.

ALFRED JARRY (1873-1906), something of a mythical hero to successive generations of the avant-garde (he still has a fol-

lowing of Pataphysicians), was a picturesque figure in the golden days of French Bohemia at the turn of the century with his "bull-dog" (a revolver he brandished and even fired on social occasions; he inspired similar actions in Picasso), his diet of absinthe and pickles, and his *boutades* (dying of malnutrition, he is reported to have made a last request for a toothpick). His most famous literary creation, *le Père Ubu* (Old Man Ubu), an enormous Falstaffian amalgam of bourgeois vices, was probably not originally of his manufacture: it seems significant in the history of the modern theater that the only French avant-garde play which adds a substantial comic character to the world list, Jarry's puppet farce *Ubu Roi* (1898), was actually composed by a group of high school students to satirize a despised professor. The poem translated here, "The Debraining Song," is in the spirit of the play and is probably also a collective work of schoolboy bravado, later capitalized upon by Jarry (Pataphysicians still deny this). The posthumous *Gestures and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll* (never translated into English) was uniquely Jarry's work, however, and is the description of a remarkable series of sea voyages from Paris to Paris by sieve. This book sets forth a detailed explanation of the science of *pataphysics*, the science of the rules that govern exceptions ("the laws reportedly discovered for the traditional universe being nothing but exceptions also, although more frequent ones, in any case nothing but accidental facts which, as rather unexceptional exceptions, do not even have the virtue of singularity") and of the study of the universe supplementary to our own; it also establishes the mathematical formula for God.

A POOR UNFORTUNATE — XAVIER FORNERET

He pulled it from
The hole in his pocket,
And raised it to his eyes;
He gazed at it fixedly
And murmured, "Everything dies."

He breathed on it
With his humid breath;

THE CARLETON MISCELLANY

He almost was afraid
Of a horrible thought in his heart
The vision of it made.

He moistened it
With a frozen tear
Which melted by accident;
His room was as full of holes
As a market in a tent.

He rubbed it hard,
It would not warm,
He could not make it play;
It was so pinched with cold,
It quickly moved away.

He weighed it
As you weigh an idea,
By leaning it on air.
He took its measurement
With a piece of broken chair.

He touched it
To his wrinkled lip—
In a sudden burst of fright
It trembled and cried out,
“Farewell, oh hold me tight!”

He kissed it,
And he folded it
Across his body's clock
Which muttered, out of order,
A sodden tick and tock.

He fondled it
With a steady hand,
Resolved to make it die.
“At least, it will make a bite
I can be nourished by.”

He bent it,
He broke it,
He placed it,
He cut it,
He washed it,
He grated,
He grilled it,
He ate it.

*When he was a little boy, they had told him, "If you're
so hungry, eat one of your hands."*

THE KIPPERED HERRING — CHARLES CROS

There once was a wall—blank, blank, blank,
And a very tall ladder—high, high, high,
And a kippered herring—dry, dry, dry.

Holding in his hands—dirty, dirty, dirty,
A hammer and a nail—sharp, sharp, sharp,
And a ball of string—fat, fat, fat,

He climbed the ladder—high, high, high;
He hammered in the nail—bang, bang, bang,
In the great white wall—blank, blank, blank;

He dropped the hammer—down, down, down;
Tied the string to the nail—long, long, long;
To the kippered herring—dry, dry, dry;

He came down the ladder—high, high, high;
Picked it up with the hammer—heavy, heavy, heavy;
And he went away—far, far, far.

And ever since, the herring—dry, dry, dry,
On the end of the string—long, long, long,
Has very slowly swung—forever, forever, forever.

I made up this story—simple, simple, simple,
To enrage the grown-ups—solemn, solemn, solemn,
And to tickle the children—little, little, little.

THE DEBRAINING SONG — ALFRED JARRY

I worked for a time as a carpenter,
Rue du Champ de Mars, in the days of spring,
My spouse was employed by a milliner,
And never did we lack a single thing.—
And every Sunday when it wasn't raining,
We'd go down town where everyone goes,
We'd go down town to watch the debraining
Dressed in our very best Sunday clothes.

Listen, listen to the cog-wheels rumble,
Look, look at the brains jump out,
See, see the Brokers tremble;

(Chorus): Hooray for the pig with the pimply snout! ¹

Our two kids fighting for the cookie jar
And joyfully waving their dolls in the air,
We'd all climb into the family car,
And down we'd roll to the Court House square.
Everybody rushes to get next to the fence,
We elbow each other to get the best views;
Me, I'd always try to stand up on a bench
So I wouldn't get any blood on my shoes. (Refrain.)

Soon the wife and I are white with brains,
The kids eat it up and we jump with joy
When we see the Palotin wave the chains
And the metal tags and the hoi polloi.—
Suddenly I see right next to the machine
The face of a guy I think I know:
My boy, says I, I know your bean,
You rolled me once and you've got to go. (Refrain.)

Just then, my wife, she gives me a tap:
"Old sausage," she says, "now's the time to play:
Paste him in the puss with a piece of crap
While the Palotin's looking the other way."—

¹ My heretical euphemism for the untranslatable, "Hourra, cornes-au-cul, vive le Père Ubu!"

When I hear this excellent piece of advice,
I say to myself, well, I'll give it a try:
And I heave at the Broker a tremendous slice
Which hits the Palotin smack in the eye. (Refrain.)

And then right away I know the worst,
The furious crowd has me on my back
And they pick me up and I go head first
Down the big black hole where you never come back.—
That's what you do Sundays when it isn't raining,
When you've had your Sunday breakfast in bed,
You go down town to see the debraining,
You go down living and you come back dead.
Listen, listen to the cog-wheels rumble,
Look, look at the brains jump out,
See, see the Brokers tremble;
Hooray for the pig with the pimply snout!



● WILLIAM JAY SMITH

PIDGIN PINCH

Joe, you Big Shot! You Big Man!
You Government Issue! You Marshall Plan!

Joe, you got plenty Spearmint Gum?
I change you Money, you gimme Some!

Joe, you want Shoe-Shine, Cheap Souvenir?
My Sister overhaul you Landing Gear?

Joe, you Queer Kid? Fix-you Me?
Dig-Dig? Buzz-Buzz? Reefer? Tea?

Joe, I find you Belly Dance,
Trip Around the World—Fifty Cents!

Joe, you got Cigarette? Joe, you got Match?
Joe, you got Candy? You Sum - Bitch,

You think I Crazy? I waste my Time?
I give you *Trouble!* Gimme a *Dime!*

TWO PASSAGES
FROM *THE BOOK*

By JOHN PAUKER

I.
WRINKLE RAMPANT

Norman Wrinkle came cascading into Linda Furbelow's studio with umbrella, hat, dog on a leash, flowers and a box of chocolates:

"—my dear, Adam Hoar has endowed me! I'm to become a foundation. The Norman Wrinkle Humane Foundation. Or should it be the Humane Norman Wrinkle Foundation? Down, Checquers, sit in that chair and be quiet. Linda, have you heard —"

He told her how he had undone Jimbo Bellwether, acquired Bellpub with its string of magazines, consolidated those magazines into his own Friday Forecast, and about the international editions he planned to launch—good, good, good from every angle.

Naively Linda asked whether he meant to retain Bellwether.

"I'm afraid he would not be compatible with my approach. But I *am* thinking to move into the Bellwethers' penthouse when they are evicted. Can't stand the neighbors in my present building. They grow grass in their living room and practice putting on the green. All night long I hear them shouting 'Fore!' at each other. And they keep alligators in the bathtub."

Why not live at his country place and commute, like the rest of the world?

"Can you see me living in the country? Some people go home after work and raise a lawn. I go to the King Cole Bar and raise money. Grass fades. Money stays green forever."

Most city people like to have something green in their homes, if only absinthe or crème de menthe, both of which after all are distillations of growing things. Not Wrinkle. Norman lived in acute apprehension of the mute threat inherent in splendidly mounting hillsides, in breath-takingly beautiful ravines, in the

very food he ate and the air he breathed; to him they meant falling rocks, collapsing bridges, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, diseases of the heart. He was painfully sensible of the poisonous potential in a splinter of rotten wood, the paralysis in a rusty nail, the contagion in a tablespoon of water. These were terrors which he never confided to his psychoanalyst because he thought therapy would either reconcile him to them or deprive him of them and in either case reduce his effectiveness, for it was just those goads that kept him going. Speaking now of his analyst, Dr. Sally Quoin, he lofted his eyes toward the skylight and prayerfully said:

“—great, *great* woman! She is my link to God.”

—explaining that man can grasp God with his human faculties alone and consequently man's religious concepts must have a human foundation which however is susceptible of scientific, and specifically psychoanalytic, study. All in all:

“She opened my eyes. Because of her, I have hit my stride. She cured me of my self-delusion. How penetrating she is! It all happened the other day when I was scoffing, in my blindness, at the crass commercialism of the president of, say, General Engines. In my ignorance I said, ‘To me, no matter how many automobiles he makes, he is still a mechanic.’ And Sally drove right to the heart of the matter when she so unerringly replied: ‘Quite wrong, Norman. A mechanic makes automobiles. A president of General Engines makes profits.’ My spine tingled with the cold perspiration of which mystics speak—it was a revelation. I no longer need to despise or envy the engineers of our age—I can work with them now, love them, understand them and show them the way. *Kraft durch Freude!*” he said. “That's my program. Strength through Freud.”

Linda alluded to the recent marriage, rather surprising was it not, between Sally Quoin and the blind Adam Hoar. Wrinkle said:

“The wedding of science and philosophy. That is a good marriage. That is a right marriage. God works in His mysterious ways and I am happy to think I was instrumental in bringing that marriage about.”

Sally, it appeared, was not only his link to the human foundation of religious concepts but also to the humane foundation

which Adam Hoar had endowed. As for Hoar himself, Norman quivered in reminiscent tedium:

"— Hoar is a bore."

— explaining that three different names have been given to this phenomenon in nature. In the ocean such a sharp level discontinuity, which may be caused by a submarine volcanic eruption, is called a tidal wave. In very swift mountain streams there are stationary level discontinuities produced by obstructions or changes in the slope of the stream bed that slow the stream down: such a discontinuity is known as a hydraulic jump. In the mouths of certain rivers the incoming tide steepens into a dangerous discontinuity called a bore. Bores, he said, have been observed in Canada's Bay of Fundy and in many tropical rivers. In a short story Somerset Maugham, who should know a bore when he saw one, described the horror of being caught by a bore on a river in Borneo. But:

"— that horror was as nothing compared to Hoar, who is a bore's bore. If being a bore is the greatest sin we know, as I confidently believe, then Hoar is our archsinner — a Prometheus of boredom with his eyes plucked out."

And now he came to the point of his visit, by a circumlocutory route:

"— it is generally held that the gentlemen of the Century Club and the Union League have the highest *per capita* incidence of ulcers in this ulcerous city. A snare and a delusion. All they do is sit on their fat fantasies; I've been there and I know. Only the bus drivers and Norman Wrinkle get ulcers," said Norman Wrinkle, "and I've just sprouted my second one. They are the marks of a man of action — a laboring man. They are the marks of my wide humanity. They are my battle scars and battle stars. They are my Congressional Medals of Honor. But, Linda —"

He was not strong enough to advance his mission alone any more. He needed a helpmeet. This was when, with a sweep, he presented the box of chocolates and proposed matrimony. Anxiously, fond lover, he watched her face while his right thumb worked like an oil drill in the lower pocket of his vest —

Anthropologists are right to pay close heed to the material

artifacts of a culture. It is these—the implements, stone axes, arrowheads, potter's wheels, discarded condoms, beanies with a propellor on top—which define the coordinates of a way of life. An anthropologist taking stock of material artifacts of the culture under review would do well to note the snuffbox which Norman Wrinkle concealed in his vest pocket. In his vest pocket Norman Wrinkle, during penurious days, used to carry a matchboxful of dead beetles and one of these, after a sumptuous dinner in roadhouse or restaurant, he would drop into the dessert—which procedure enabled him to stomp out indignantly, threatening lawsuit and leaving the check unpaid. No longer. During recent years of orphanhood he concealed, in his vest pocket, a snuffbox which held the ashes of his dead mother. This he fingered in moments of crisis. This too gave him strength to go on.

When Norman Wrinkle secured his first job—as a part-time radio announcer—he told his widowed mother to tune him in. Returning home, he asked her what she thought. He had been through a bout of minute-long commercials at the rate of one every six minutes on a three-hour musical orgy.

"Pap!" she said. "Popsies, snapsies and flapsies!" That was what she thought of a man who took money for the pear-shaped inflection of words arranged to sell another man's buckwheat cakes, purgatives or underdrawers with built-in rumble seat. For weeks she missed no opportunity to ring changes on this theme, referring (rather inaccurately) to her son even over the telephone as "my whoreson." Be it said to Norman's credit that he fully agreed with her, left the job and entered a library, choosing a life of penury rather than prostitution. This was in his early, idealistic days. At college his ultimate gesture of nonconformity had been to set off alarm clocks in chapel during Sunday service—and ever since then, figuratively speaking, he had continued setting off alarm clocks in chapel. But character will out, and there came the Norman Conquest. It was said of Norman Wrinkle that his stay among the Lololanders* had com-

* For an account of this sojourn and other revelations about our man, the reader is referred to "The New Wrinkle: A Fragment" in *Furioso*, vol. IV, no. 2, pp. 7-11. — J.P.

pletely changed his outlook. Someone who knew him before the war once protested:

"The man was a complete cipher — a zero!"

"You know that, but the Lolos could not know, for they had never evolved the concept of zero."

"Surely they might have learnt of it from Wrinkle."

That was unfair. Without interrogation the anthropologist of whom we speak could hardly have known whether Norman carried the snuffbox to remind him of mom's strong will or of his present whoredom — which was, at least, a paying profession and deserved a sneaking vest-pocket pride even from a man who publicly excoriated pride. And an interrogator had merely to put the questions. Wrinkle knew all the answers: he knew that the way to wreak vengeance when a hostess has served a poor dinner is to ask for her recipe and then destroy it. He knew that the way to strike back at a hostess deficient in every respect is, before leaving, to sneak to the master bathroom and punch holes in her diaphragm. He knew that revenge on an inattentive host is to hide sticks of dynamite in his woodpile. He knew that the way to get even with an inattentive girl is to write her name and telephone number in the washrooms of all the sleaziest bars in town. He knew that the way to hit back at a surly shop-keeper is simply to press, on your way out, the little button on the door which makes it inaccessible from the outside. But he did not know what Linda Furbelow would reply when, with that ring of sincerity which is the most imitated form of flattery, he asked for her hand:

"— think of it as a sacrifice for humanity —"

"But suppose I don't love you!"

"Love is optional, like white wall tires. This troubled planet needs fighters, not lovers."

She stroked his cheek kindly:

"Norman, I'm deeply grateful —"

But she did not think she was good enough for him, and Wrinkle could hardly dissent from a conclusion which, when all was said and done, was also his own.

II.
CRUX

(After a difficult trial of time and error, Linda finds herself spread-eagled at the crossroads)

Snow falling on the world, white: a Cape Cod cottage, snow swirling around the cottage: a path leading to the cottage, snow banked against the path: alongside the path a snowman, somber, wearing a rakishly tilted top hat and holding a gnarled club against his snow shoulder: trees alongside the snowman, black, their crooked boughs bent against the storm like knobby fingers of the dead thrusting through the earth to shake an admonitory message: here is the world on the palm of your hand, be careful what you do with it.

The snow settles and then the snowfall whitely begins again, for it is only artificial snow in a glass paperweight on the palm of Linda's hand, a child's toy hemisphere, sole memento of the mother she could not remember having had, and thus a talisman. But she must have had a mother in the natural order of things, the paperweight was proof, years ago they described it as a gift from her missing mother. For two days Linda has been sitting in her studio apartment, toying with the glass hemisphere, turning it this way and that, setting the snow aswirl and letting it settle, parsing the unnatural order or natural disorder of things as they are.

The study of order is an intensely subjective pursuit. On public order: to a nihilist, anarchy may represent a reprehensible degree of order. On personal order: any private gesture may mean a thousand things—the man you see constantly clapping a hand to his lips may seem disordered, but to him it is his grip on supreme order because that was where his mistress kissed him before finally deranging their arrangement. We clutch our silly secrets as though they were our all, our copyright on selfdom; while legend has it that there is nothing comparable to giving yourself away, compared to which selfdom is serfdom (here is your secret order: give yourself away, completely, melt like a snowman in the sun, become as nothing. Burn this).

Imagine yourself with a festering wisdom tooth. It has a tiny abutment of gum beneath which particles of food collect. The little deposits of garbage give little pain. The pain is bearable. Imperceptibly the deposits increase, and so does the pain. The little pain becomes, imperceptibly, a big pain, but always bearable. Each degree of its painful increase is bearable—until you are afflicted with a very great pain which you can hardly distinguish from the little pain you had at first. You wonder when you will reach the frontier between bearable and unbearable, but you do not think you will know because the daily increment of pain is so slight as to evade comparison.

That was how Linda felt. Trembling with apprehension, she told herself it was absurd to feel as she did. But only absurdity could save the world from its present decline, the house is on fire, the girders are toppling, the firemen will no longer dare the flames; then a feather-headed bystander breaks through the cordon, dashes into the inferno and an excruciating moment later emerges triumphantly bearing in his arms—what? A pet dog, a photograph album or a phonograph, a half-finished bottle of beer, someone's grandmother, the One True Cross? How absurd of him to take the risk; the fellow belongs in jail and police cart him away before irate spectators rend him limb from limb for putting them to shame. But only an absurdity would serve; Linda recalled what her father had said about the close link between garbage and wisdom, order and ordure, *aurum e stercore* as he put it:

“—so we build on decay, my dear colleague, dross mounts at the threshold of pain. The deeper the trash the more fertile the field. The better you understand the ecology of your own cesspool, the closer you are to wisdom. But only an apocalyptic leap right into the pit will clear the threshold to pure pain, where you find pure wisdom. And how absurd we look when we leap—”

And he said to the uncomprehending child:

“—without apotheosis there is only comparative wisdom. Apotheosis is the leap across the barrier, the complete commitment of self to something outside yourself. It is akin to death—complete death. A hazardous barrier. Not many make the crossing—”

And he told her the parable of the Zen Buddhist monk who led his trusting disciple to the barrier—in this story, the high brink of a chasm. The teacher stretched himself like a bridge across the chasm and invited his student to make use of the bridge. When the grateful student was halfway across, the teacher let go—and they both plunged into the abyss below.

Her father, saying:

“—no one can help you, no more than you can help anyone. And without complete death there is only the partial wisdom that comes with ravening time—with nibbling niggling partial deaths. Ah, Linda—the little deaths, the little deaths! Have you ever thought how, with each breath, you suck up part of that outside objective world and make it part of yourself? And how, by the same token, the same airy ephemeral token, with each release of breath you expel something of yourself upon the world? How much of the world have I consumed? A county? A state? A continent? And how much of myself have I spewed forth into the world? And what, after all, is it that is left?—”

Trembling Linda lay on the floor, with one hand at her throat and the other clutching the paperweight storm. After the onslaught of intuitions, the charge of prescience closing in, the avenging anabasis of insights against her, disgust like a phalanx of faceless metallic hoplites running her down—after the distaste and revulsion and retreat she felt she had descended past any further delusion and was now in the pit, grappling with the despair of inevitable trespass and face to face with her abysmal knowledge that she could not love any one more than another without first learning to love all equally. Love: the most difficult word in the language to pronounce correctly. How can you give your secrets away when no one will listen? give yourself away when no one remembers the tribe's lost art of taking what is given and leaving things as they are? Poor presumptive Linda! Shall I tell her now, put her out of her misery, or leave her in trembling suspense? Shall I say to her with good gray Toynbee that when one of God's creatures is tempted by the Devil, God Himself is thereby given the opportunity to re-create the world? And that would surely prick the skin along her spine, bring on the cold sweat of which mystics speak. But, with all respect to the learned beard and his language of mythology: Who still

speaks it? Really, what possible reason do we have to suppose that God could conceivably care enough about our cut-rate world to seize any such pinball moment as we have just reached and — *tilt!* — reverse the natural order that has come to no good and make us all good, His truly beloved again? God is no management consultant. Can you honestly imagine Him preferring our impractical joker's hoax of a world to the limitless others within His reach, each better because none could be worse? And do you in all seriousness see Him descending to more minute discriminatory distinctions, saving some and skewering others? No, I cannot believe He makes invidious comparisons. Rather, if He holds this cheapjack gimcrack knickknack world on the palm of His hand, I see Him fastidiously flick it with a finger away, like a hissing fizgig or cherry bomb or blood-filled tick — the tick of time — before it bursts. But — really! — why should He bother at all? I say He has washed His hands of us and walked away. Don't fret, He'll be back in a minute.

Poor Linda! All worked up and waiting for the word, stripped bare as she fancies, writhing like a Holy Roller in what she construes as a convulsion of ecstasy but a less flattering diagnosis might show to be low metabolism or something glandular. Shall I tell Linda that hers is only a farcical farrago tempest in a trumpery trinket token which her mother never gave her? a mock-up mass-made mythless miniworld without any such time-honored respectable antipodes as fire or ice, earth or even air but only fake cornflake snow suffocatingly suspended in tepid last-ditch water to make the tinsel sensation endure a little longer, even the glass is only plastic because cheaper?

Listen, children: to diversify the company she keeps shall I tell Linda about tall tender Rollie Kahn, bunched over us in history class like a highly civilized question mark; about wire-haired Winnie Smith with his football helmet awry as he smashed through the line to clobber — that was the word we used — the opposition's secondary defense; about Art Nelson and his literary gift; Scotty Heim and his sweet secret smile? Gents I spent some months among, they were truly beloved, good men all, fun to go down to the Old Knick with and have a couple of brews, of the sort with whom you easily identify, worth rooting for, so good that it hurts and, being good, bound to

win; we need more of them here and if only for that reason they belong in this unfolding chronicle and might even have played some redeeming role in it if not for the fact that they were all killed in the war, thoroughly dead and daily growing moldier. Two ways to look at this, of course: What have we built on their graves? Or: What have they been spared by an early death? This much is certain, those mounds you see are the mud-pies we made, I recommend them to your sympathetic consideration.

Poor Linda! As things stand or fall there seems little hope of redemption: God walked away and those who refused His commandment are all headed for the refuse pit. With the world nothing but one vast discount house, where do lovers go? Do they loiter in the dingy corridor outside the ladies' room, hoping for a chance interval to hug and kiss? But discount houses have no ladies' nor gents', all they want is to make a sale. They do not stock romance because it is not a wanted item — or, if they give it a thirty-day trial, they put in a single line and tuck it away in the sporting goods department and eventually remainder it as a loss leader. They say it does not *move*. Look for it on a remote counter at the five-and-dime. This is not to say that there are no alternatives ahead of us. It is simply to say that the alternatives are as between Auschwitz and Buchenwald, or shall we (let's, just this once) say Buchenwalden by Thoreau.

Now we know where lovers go and there — there perhaps is a mild dispensation. There, who are the truly beloved? Picture this: Time is a distress signal at which our scattered column rises and forms a line before the higher authority that doles out our fate. Picture two grated doors, marked A and B. You go to Auschwitz; you, there, to Buchenwald. To Auschwitz are sent those who retain their natural state, the innocents, how noble! how savage! the tourists with the cameras, who really believe they are only passing through, and the tough-minded who are born but once, carrying their heavy slaughterhouse scales — no springs, honest weight. They are the ones who do good because they know no better, who never yield to temptation because they are never tempted and who never resist temptation for the same reason. They are the happy, the home-owners, the good insurance risks, salt of the earth however much the salt has lost

its savor, and they have the Devil's favor — the ones who can do no wrong because, like their monkey ancestors in man's natural state, they hear, speak, see, know no evil. Evil: an attributive noun formed from the name of our first mother, Eve. The self-possessed, the well-intentioned, and who shall say they are not truly beloved by the Devil? The doting moms and mother's pets who relish life and regret its loss — as between lovers and lovers they are the lovers of pleasure and they go to Auschwitz.

But — to Buchenwald! Listen, Linda: those possessed of the Devil know that what makes life so intolerable is life, and evil is the root of all evil. To Buchenwald go the Devil-possessed, those who know evil and have a touch of malice in them, those with the hubris to rise from the rubble heap and push on regardless, those who play but when they play it is for keeps, the ones with fine apothecary scales who are not above a little swindle just to see how it feels; the demon-driven, the desperate on whom demons delight to feed, the tender-minded who are born twice, the lovers of pain, the happy in hotels go to Buchenwald. Likewise the Christers, the ones with the "tragic sense," the soul-searchers so responsive or is it sensitive that they lose sleep and weight through worry over what they could but do not do to or with or against their fellow man — whose sensibilities did I invade today, whose illusion of self-esteem did I intimidate, whose prejudices did I fail to massage, what trespasses did I commit? Likewise those on an ethical kick, the orgiasts of forbearance, those who dream in Technicolor and see the entire spectrum, the gentle who are fastidious to the point of promiscuity, you know them — she is sometimes the lay of the land and he the prick of conscience. To Buchenwald go those whose emblem of party affiliation is the hair shirt, those noted for nicety of decision even if their decisions are not all nice, they are the ones who will sooner go hungry than satisfy an appetite and sate Satan; the hypersensitively wired, the painfully aware, the articulate — look in any thesaurus, there are far more words for pain than for pleasure. Study the higher authority behind the desk, Linda, in the hornèd hood — did you really think God would walk away? If He is immanent then He is here — Who, perhaps because we otherwise occupy Him so little, took on this part-time job for extra income. To Buchenwald go the dare-

and chance- and risk-takers; the tempted whether they resist or yield; the hellions and daredevils, the Devil-theorists and the devilishly clever, the Devil-may-care, the Devil-lived, they are the ones with whom the Devil does his best business. God as His own junior partner does not make invidious comparisons either, but I like to think that those who have hobnobbed with the Devil are given the slight preferment which prior acquaintance everywhere merits, I venture to say they are the more truly beloved in the pit, the ones with taste, they have a special savor, they are to the Devil's taste and flavor and they go to Buchenwald—the ones with a pinch of paprika go to Buchenwald, where the tortures are at least refined and the incinerators more amusingly interior-decorated.

Snow in midsummer, and an ordained reversal of disorder? All well and good to sing Christmas carols in the heat of July, but for God's sake where is Santa Claus? Is he afraid the heat will melt him? Is this too hot for you, old beard?

Yes, Linda, there is a Santa Claus, Santa Claus is the nick of time, time that waits for all men. It is a questionable boon of our age that the black magic of actuarial tables has lengthened our life span. What shall we do with the time? In Auschwitz they say the interest of remaining alive is to see what happens next, as if anything ever happens next. In Buchenwald they speak of death as the final refinement of sensibility, the one experience worth anticipating. Time only multiplies the little deaths, the partial deaths, and delays the advent of supreme order and pure wisdom. Become as nothing. Or, as my radio yesterday remarked, "Why wait for death? Be buried now! Enjoy your own funeral!" Christmas is holy to Norman Wrinkle because we celebrate it by cutting down so many trees . . . the cold commercial ecstasy of Christmas! They have a man who ejaculates uranium, form a commission, investigate. And I once saw a man shoot a horse to put it out of its misery, did you ever see a horse do as much for a man? Write the story of twenty-four hours in the life of a salmon, you project yourself into the mind of a salmon with so little difficulty. Do you remember what the draftees used to say: "I'm not a fighter, I'm a lover!" What did they die of — Rollie, Winnie, Scotty, Art? Beauty, Honor, Love, Death? Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog — better simply say they died

of death and not examine the question too closely. Whiten your sepulcher, sir? Tell the one about the—. Many's the time together we—. Now just relax, this will not hurt a bit. Kindly remove your clothing, now say *Ah-b*. Taken in quantity the pills are fatal. Drop ten into a glass and watch them—like the snowstorm settling in a child's toy hemisphere—dissolve . . .

● CONSTANCE URDANG

THE ROMANTIC

Finding the path into the enchanted wood
Precociously, he chased the unicorn,
Slew dragons to still the roaring of his blood,
Skilfully jousted, and unhorsed his peers.

But when they penetrated his disguise
They said the giant never meant to harm,
The monster in the thicket was all lies.
So he continued on his quest alone,

And somehow never came upon the wall
That stood between his tourneys and a world
Immense and threatening;

but was content
To play at knights and crosses to the end.

● ROBERT SWARD

THE MANHATTAN DIRECTORY,—FROM A NOTICE
IN THE *NEW YORK TIMES*

JUDGMENT, COURAGE, SCHOLARSHIP!

Distinguished, definitive,
One of the great works of our time.
Nominated for the Book. . .
An altogether marvelous,
Learnéd,—alternately light,
Demanding; ribald, tasteful. . .
Always informative work.
Dramatic, Dickensian
A brilliant, a reference
Masterpiece! Easily the
Sane, the Standard Edition
(Beautifully bound, illustrated)
Ordered, anticipated, by
Three-and-a-half million readers.
Here, at long-last, then, is this
Exhaustive, and eagerly
Awaited, imaginative
Thrilling & downright inspired
Scribner-spectacular!
Allen Ginsberg says, "*Wow! Wow!*"
Norman Vincent Peale:—"A volume
Destined—*deathless, timely*—to be
Read. The good people at Yale have
Earned our thanks! This is research
At its best. Affirmative,
Documented. Most impressive!"
Stephen Spender:—"Objective,
Sincere, remarkably
Human. Loving, and yet detached.
Intense. *Immensely detailed!*"
TIME:—"Major Work! *Indispensable!*"

ADVERTISEMENT

'SUDS' IN TERRYCLOTH,—MR. & MRS.

Ahhhhh, froths she, her soapchip teeth
to Mr. Terry S.

She like he is in her 'clean clear through'
(*and deodored, too!*) bathrobe.

Raising her FAB- right arm, one hand
against the armpit

And the other at her wrist, he gnaws
and drools into the terrycloth.

Ahhhhh, cries she, her teeth and tongue
at him. She seems pleased.

He grins and glistens from his eyes;
he licks her then, up

And down her spine, Ahhhhh! !
licked-lipped, she runs her tongue. . .

'Dazzling white (*to be sure*), but
something more! It's as if

'Suds and sunlight had combined
To Terry swiftly, agilely through

'And up and down her robe. No wonder he can't
keep his tongue away! !'

Ahhhhh! ! ! Its thick, soft white nap
outdates all dulling soap-scum cleanliness.

—Nor is his robe without its attractions:
she sniffs his bushy belt; he blushes,

Blues, froths into the air, and slaps
his little webbed feet hard upon the floor.

She spreads her robe to him; and he, his
to her; she moistens him

And he, her. Bursting, from within their pelts,
teeth bubbles suds. . . ahhhhh. . .

● DONALD HALL

TWO EPIGRAMS

1.

At ten o'clock, Monday through Saturday,
Professor Dullard shambles through his knowledge.
Once in a bar I heard a drunkard say,
"Well, I'm not much, I didn't go to college."

2.

The poet *M.* is hateful, yet I own he
Writes honest verse although he is a phoney.
A.'s poems, which have made him a career,
Lie through their teeth, although he is sincere.
If fraud is true and honesty a fake,
I'll cut a cake-cook while I eat his cake,
And not read Arthur's poems, for Art's sake.

● IRVING FELDMAN

ON A YOUNG CRITIC

Come and cheer Mr. Sass
Who a thousand philistines slew,
Being the jawbone of an ass.

NOTE ON THE "UNDERGROUND MAN"

Those thinkers and poets I inculcate
Who raise the doubly ironic cry:
"My limitations are great
And great therefore am I!"

THE PRICE OF DEER

by WAYNE CARVER

I was riding with Dad on the V-shaped go-devil that spread two rows apart making a place for the piles of topped sugar beets when he got all excited and whispered, "Look there, Son."

He was pointing along the edge of the creek. Through the ragged flakes of wet snow, I could see the outline of a deer about fifty yards away. So I moved quickly into a ditch while Dad unhitched the team and began to tie the reins to a cedar post of the fence that ran along the headland of the field. I kept my eye on the deer, peering at it through the brown tangle of tumble weeds that filled our ditches in the fall. It was browsing on tufts of dry grass just above some cattails in the creek, not at all nervous the way a deer that far from the mountains ought to have been. It had a heavy rack, about a four point, I figured. In the snow, looking at the deer was like watching something from behind a thin curtain that you could just barely see through.

Dad crawled along the ditch.

"How do you figure a deer got out here?" I asked him.

"Who cares?" he said. "Who cares, Son? The thing to worry about is scaring it."

He glanced over at the team that had twisted around, rumps to the storm, nipping at each other's jaws and necks.

"Steady there," he said.

He looked up to the other end of the field where my brother was working away. We could hear the sound of his beet knife whisking cleanly through the beets, and the sharp, metallic clacking of the blade as he trimmed the green from around the edges.

"I better get Nephi before he scares it," Dad said. "You keep your eyes on the critter." After he had crawled along the ditch for a ways, he turned back to me. "If he shies and looks like he's going to trot away, come running." Then he was gone.

I spread the weeds just a little with my hands so I could see the buck without any trouble. It was a pretty thing to watch, dipping its head to the grass, then lifting it to the storm, its

skinny feet moving easily in the mud of the creek bank.

I looked around at the piles of beets fluffed with snow, the neat windrows of tops running back to the other headland. Then I looked toward the mountains twenty miles to the east and to the brown line of hills across the northern tip of the Great Salt Lake to the west and wondered how the deer had made it so far, wherever it had made it from.

Nephi and Dad crawled along side of me, Nephi cradling his 16 gauge pump gun in his arm. The deer had turned its white flag toward us and trotted a few yards farther along the sides of the creek. Nephi looked through the weeds.

"Man," he said, as if he were short of breath, "A settin' duck."

"Some duck," I said.

"Man alive!" Nephi said, not taking his eyes away from it.

Dad was looking around.

"You'll have to get broadside from him, Son," he said. "Shoot him in the juggler."

"Why didn't I bring the 30-30," Nephi wailed, looking away from the deer for the first time since he had crawled up. "A blasted duck gun for a deer. Man!"

Dad went on making plans. "Better walk over to the road," he said, motioning east to a county dirt road that went along-side our field. "Walk up a quarter of a mile and cut across in front of him."

"A lousy shotgun," Nephi said in disgust. "If I get close enough to kill him, I'll ruin all the meat."

"I'm telling you," Dad said, "you've got to blow his throat open. He'll run for a while, but he'll drop. Shoot him any place else and you lose him. He'll go clear out to the Lake to die."

"Why don't I just jump on his back and choke him with my hands?" Nephi said. But he began to crawl away.

The deer had not wandered far. It grazed along the creek as if it were in a pasture.

"Nephi'll go back to the gate and up along the road and get a bit of a lead on the critter," Dad said. "Then he'll cut across and hide in the willows up ahead there." He pointed to a clump of thick willows beyond where the deer was. I could just barely see their tops through the storm.

"Maybe the buck'll trot this way or to the side," I said.

"That's our job," he said. "We're going to shoo him right into Nephi's gun. Now you snuggle down here."

So we snuggled down behind the weeds and felt the wet seep through our over-alls and waited.

After about ten minutes we saw Nephi walking along the road and watched him cut across in front of where the deer was and disappear into the willows. Dad stood up.

"The creek'll steer him on the left all right," he said. "Now give me a minute to get over on his other flank to keep him from bolting that way. Then you shoo him north along the creek."

Dad was almost straight across from the buck when it saw him. It turned slowly, gave one of those long sailing leaps and trotted towards the creek. I scrambled out of the ditch and waved my arms twice over my head. The buck spun half around, the way Dad figured it would, took a few running steps and sailed high over a ditch, then began that dog trot they have right past the willow clump. Nephi's shot centered at the spot where you stick them with the knife. The buck went on a ram-page as soon as it was hit and fell dead in a circle of red mud and slush half a mile up the creek.

We had it dressed out and hanging rack down from an old single-tree at the back of the tool and harness shed when Feenus Grimes' old green Chevy clattered through the gate and shuddered to a stop in front of where we were eating lunch just inside the shed's door. Feenus was talking before he had the car door open.

". . . out of sight," he was saying, working his jaws. "Get that deer down, I'm telling you." He went straight up to Dad who had a sandwich in trouble between the lunch bucket and his mouth. He lowered it.

"I'm telling you," Feenus said, standing over him, "it's all over town you killed that buck."

I looked at Dad. His eyes were on Feenus, but they looked as if they didn't see anything.

"Go on, Jos," Feenus said. Dad's cheek humped and the hump moved around as he worked his tongue. Feenus turned to me and Nephi. "You kids," he said. "You better dig a big hole and

put that carcass in it. Then you better get at covering up the hair and blood and guts. I kid you not."

Nephi and I started to get up.

"Wait a minute," Dad said. Feenus had hunkered down in front of us and was already wetting up the juice in a piece of hay with his tongue and teeth. "Just a sec," Dad said again. We stopped, and Dad looked over at Feenus.

"What deer's this you're talking about, Feen?"

Feenus examined the dripping end of his hay, turned it over and picked at something in a back tooth.

"The one rigged-up there back of the shed," he said, holding up his toothpick, squinting at it, squishing a little air through his back teeth with his cheek. "I've warned you now, Jos. There ain't a guy up town but that's heard of it. Just a matter of time until Buck Anderson hears about it, too." He shrugged his shoulders and worked the hay around his lips with his tongue. "No skin off my nubbin. Maybe you've got a hundred bucks for the fine. Figured you didn't. Figured I'd hi-tail it like a big bird and tell you the news was out. Left me a good hand of rummy, too."

"You're haywire," Dad said. "Where would we get a deer to shoot out here?"

"Well, I'll be go to hell!" Feenus rocked back and forth on his haunches. "You mean, Jos, you ain't seen that four-point buck hanging off this shack. Walked in here, dropped dead, gutted himself, and hoisted himself up on that single-tree, did it?" He rocked and chuckled some more. "I do be go to hell now! We do learn about the damndest things. Well, now! You got nothing to worry about. You just tell Buck Anderson what happened when he gets here asking questions. May be he'll take a picture of you." He lumbered to his feet. "You tell Buck, Jos. Me? I'll just mosey back to town and play that hand of rummy."

He turned and flipped his piece of hay through the door into the snow, went out and climbed into his car, and after a few minutes of rattles and bangs and the sound of escaping steam, we saw it out on the road headed back to town.

"They couldn't know," Dad said, as we watched the old Chevy disappear. "How could they?"

"Somebody might of heard the shot," I said.

"They'd of thought it was for ducks," Nephi said.

"He didn't get back of the shed," Dad said. "There's no blood or anything in front. He couldn't of seen it from the road. He can't see through wood. But I can't pay no fine, either."

For a while nobody said anything. I began to eat another cold pork sandwich.

"Feenus made it all up," Nephi said. "It's another one of his danged fool tricks."

"I don't see how he could of, Son," Dad said. "He knew too much of the facts of the case." He got to his feet and peered out the door toward the spot where the road Feenus had come down veers off to the east. "I don't know. You might see that deer from the down the road, if you look mighty sharp," he said, coming back. "Maybe just enough for somebody like Feenus."

"He's seen enough to build on," Nephi said. "He's just raggin' us."

"May well be," Dad said. "A fine time for that, with the beets still in the ground and winter here. I know he does the cussedist things sometimes, but I always figured he was harmless enough when it came down to cases."

"'Bout as harmless as a rattler," Nephi said. "Les Poulson told me he kept a Cadillac salesman from Ogden coming out to the rummy dive at night for about two weeks, said he was in the market for a Cad. Told him finally he wasn't about to buy from no chicken company like his that don't give green stamps."

"Now, Son," Dad said. "Don't you go around saying wild things. Feenus just likes his little jokes."

"I wonder how the Cad salesman likes 'em," Nephi said.

"Well—now Feenus can for a fact sometimes do things that makes my tired ache," Dad said. "Once—neither of you was born—he showed up for the A League game on the Fourth drunk as a lord. And quit the team—stayed mad all summer—when Bill Firestone wouldn't let him in the game. Now a ball player's got no call to act like he was the only one on the team that counts. Clinton beat us out that year, and I've always want to half blame Feen for that. Seems he could of thought of the town a little more."

"He'll think of the town or anything else when it suits him," Nephi said. "Not much before."

"But don't take me wrong," Dad said. "I ain't the one to say

he don't have the right to do as he pleases. He sure can hand you the laughs. Dare say the gang at the rummy dive got a wallop out of his fun with that salesman. He gets a big kick out of things—and everbody else?—they get a kick out of watching him. So I ain't about to judge him."

Dad looked over at Nephi, as if he expected him to say something smart. When he didn't, he looked at me.

"Did I tell you about the time old Putter'd been braggin' about how good the old time ball teams was and Feenus said, 'Sure, Putt, we know. But that was before the rules was all changed around. We got to use bats now.' Well, Putt looked at him. 'What the Sam Hill you talkin' about, young feller?' You know how he talked. 'Baseball's always used bats, you crazy, no-account younger generations ain't got a brain in your head.' And Feen, he said, 'Now Putt. You can't pull that on us. We know that old Plain City team you're always braggin' up went up to bat with manure forks on their shoulders.'

"Well, old Putt starts to dance up and down like a banty rooster—you know how he looked in them old levis and yellow suspenders—'Manure forks!' he yells. 'What the God-damned hell's ailin' you, you crazy loon.' Then Feen he really starts to pour it on, all the rest of the guys around the rummy tables shoutin' in from the sides. 'And we use little bitty balls now,' Feen said. 'Leather covers sewed on with string. No more them straw and burlap things big as pumpkins the Relief Society ladies stuffed and stitched together for you Tuesdays so's you old bastards could spear 'em with your manure forks on Saturday afternoons."

Dad went over to the door and glanced up the road. Nephi looked at him. "You know what old lady—"

"Wait, Wait, Son," Dad said, sitting down. "Well, old Putt went crazy then. Everbody's hootin' and laughin' and yellin'. Putt, he's so mad he can't hardly talk, his jaws workin' away, tobacco juice runnin' off his chin while he prances up and down like he'd wear the hair off his legs. Feen keeps after him. 'Sure, you old bastards like to talk about how you settled this place and grubbed out the sagebrush and got out the first crops with your bare hands and beat Clinton ever fall for the championship, when, why hell, all you had to do to get a base hit was

snag that gunny sack a straw with the tines of the manure fork. One tine, a single; two tines, a double; three tines, a three bagger, and if you hit it flush-on and all the tines stuck, Christ-a-mighty, you had a home run just like the square was Yankee Stadium and you was Babe Ruth.'

"Well, now the gang's all howlin' even more, Putt's fumin' and prancin' like a pony with the string-holts. Feen? He's laughin' so so's he squirts the beer out the side his mouth when he tries to wet his whistle. Finally old Putter calms down a bit to say 'Yes, you crazy God-damned no-account younger generation, you couldn't come up t' the knee of them guys in the old days damned young fools ain't got a brain in your fat heads I—' Then the howls from the crowd drowns him out, and Feenus's big voices booms in, 'I know all about you old bastards, Putt. I know about when Cowan's bull over in Slaterville started to puddle and you damned fools thought it was a natural flow and built the Plain City canal.' Why then Putt starts to swear a blue streak, makes for the door and almost busts it going out, he's so jittery, and you can hear him swearin' that way all the way down the road to his house."

Dad took a red bandana out of his jumper pocket and wiped his eyes and blew his nose.

"Well," Nephi said, after a while, "I was going to say that old lady Putter judges him, if you don't. The day they took old Putter down to Provo—"

"In a butterfly net," I said. Then I giggled.

"That's enough, Son," Dad said.

"—she went up to the rummy dive and told off the crowd there. Turned worst of all on Feenus, said he'd driven Putt down there. Rimes Johnson told us Sunday at Priesthood meeting."

"Some thing for Priesthood meeting," Dad said. "Anyway, that don't mean the old lady's right."

"She's as dippy as he is," I said, repeating things I had heard. "Sitting around under the trees on the square all day painting pictures. Their house's chuck full of pictures she's painted. I used to see them when I'd take their fast-offering cards. You could smell coffee all over the house, too. I guess she'd blame the rummy dive for that."

"All right, Son, all right," Dad said. There was a long pause.

"Nothing but trees," I said, "near as I could tell. Except for a big one a Putter on his horse. I kind a liked to look at that one while she fixed up the money in the envelopes. Old Putt in his chaps and cowboy hat and on a roan pony with a fancy saddle and martingale and bridle. If you didn't know, you'd never a guessed it was old Putt. Looked more like Ken Maynard."

"I was neighbors to them twenty years and was never inside that house," Dad said.

"I can't help feeling a little for 'em both," Nephi said.

"Sure," Dad said. "Sure, Son. But that ain't sayin' Feenus Grimes and the rummy dive drove him crazy. Even if they did razz the tar out of him.

"I don't know who this town'll remember most," Nephi said. "Feen or old Putter."

Dad was eating again and said nothing.

"What's there to remember about that old loon?" I said.

"Nothing, I guess," Nephi said. "But I guess the rummy dive'll remember him anyway. He gave Feen a chance to hand them some laugh's they'd of missed."

We hunched down in our jumpers and watched Dad, who kept his eyes on the road most of the time, following it to where it left its south run to go east into town three miles away on the bench land in front of the foothills to the mountains.

"We'll risk it," he said, swallowing the last of his sandwich. "There's no more game warden coming down here than there is Santy Claus." He began to put on his mud-caked canvas gloves. "Now let's whack a few tops."

Nephi and I followed him out of the shed. It had stopped snowing and a few patches of blue moved in and out between the windrows of low clouds that raced whirling and grey-blue across the sky and along the face of the purple mountains. It was cold now that the weather was clearing and ice was forming over the crinkled tops of the beets.

We topped like mad, trying to move the work as fast as we could. After about an hour, Dad spiked a big beet with the hook of his knife and left it there like an axe in a chopping block. We saw him plow through the mud to the shed and go behind it.

After a minute or two he came around in front dragging the deer. He pushed in the shed door with his behind and pulled the buck in. In a few minutes he came out, shutting the door. He went over to the pick-up truck, took a shovel from the bed, and went around back of the shed where the deer had been. A little later he came back and began to top beets. He was puffing, red in the face. He didn't say a word to us.

We worked until it was nearly dark and kept close watch on the road, but no one came along. When we knocked off, Dad told Nephi and me to put the deer in the truck while he turned the horses into the pasture and carried them some hay. He had covered the deer with hay and straw, then covered that with an old canvas dam we used in the summer. We carried the buck in a series of lunges over to the pick-up and were trying to figure the best way of hoisting it into the bed when we saw the headlights of a car coming west along the straight stretch of road that went up to town. Dad came running over, watching the lights. All at once the lights stopped moving, glowed orange for a moment, and went out.

"Let's load up and get," Nephi said. He grabbed the antlers and started to lift all by himself.

"Wait a minute, Son," Dad said. "Why do you suppose that fellow in that car decided to stop right there?"

"It's an ambush," I said. "It's old Buck Anderson and he's waiting for us to come along with this deer."

"Naw!" Nephi said. "It's somebody with his girl. Lots of them come down here to neck. I just don't want anybody seeing us, that's all. Word gets around, you know."

"They don't come down here in the mud," Dad said; "Not on nights when somebody might say we've poached a deer."

"It's old Buck for sure," I said. "He figured we'd hide it during the day and pull it out to bring home."

"He figured right," Nephi said, "if it's him."

Dad rubbed his chin and looked over at the shed.

"We better wait," he said. "He can't of seen us over here. We'll wait him out."

"Let's fool him," Nephi said. "We'll go home and come back tomorrow—or even later tonight—and pick up the deer."

"That meat's got to be cured tonight," Dad said. "We cover it again for very long, we heat it. Leave it out in this weather,

it freezes, sure as shootin'. Either way, we lose it." He walked back into the shed and we followed him.

An hour later Dad said, "It's Buck for sure." He had been over to the deer beside the pick-up just once to cover it with the canvas dam. The rest of the time he had just sat shivering and steaming with us in the dark, watching for the car on the road to move away.

"He'll set there all night to pick us up," Nephi said. "He gets a per-cent of the fine. That's his living. Picking up guys hunting. We might as well throw it in the creek and go home."

"I don't figure we need to do that, Son," Dad's voice said through the steam from his mouth. "I figure we can do something about this." He crawled over to where Nephi and I were.

Dad's idea was to truss up the buck on a willow pole from the pasture fence so it would carry handily. Then the three of us would, somehow, carry it across the road in front of our field, cut kitty-cornered across the field on the other side of the road so we would come out, in the dark, on the road where Buck's car was but quite a way behind it. Then Nephi would sneak back across the field to our truck and come along right past Buck and pick us and the deer up and away we'd go home. If Buck stopped Nephi, he wouldn't find a thing.

"If he wants to know where the rest of the family is," Dad said, "just tell him we rode the team home after work. You stayed to cover the beets."

"What if he follows us home?" Nephi said.

Dad was already uncoiling binder twine from a spool in the corner of the shed to make the truss. I had closed the door and now held a match for him.

"Buck Anderson's not about to go scrounging around my place or anybody else's just on a hunch. It's illegal, for one thing, and hard work for another. What money that guy don't make easy he don't make."

When we had the deer trussed up, Nephi took one end of the pole and Dad the other. I tried to help Nephi on his end, but with the pole on his shoulder, I could scarcely reach it. The rack of antlers brushed against the muddy ground at every step, and Nephi's end was just enough lower than Dad's that the deer kept slipping backwards against Nephi, and he tried to support

the pole on his shoulder with one hand and push the deer up the pole away from him with the other. I pushed here and there, gave a boost once in a while to the rack, only to have it fall heavily again into the gumbo mud we were walking through. The gate to our field was down, but we rested a while. Then Nephi and Dad hoisted the pole onto their shoulders and staggered across the road to the fence of the field we would have to walk through.

"Put it down a sec," Dad said.

The fence was a new three-strand barbed wire and cedar post one. Dad pressed down hard on the bottom wire with his foot and pulled the middle wire up with his hands, making a little gap.

"I forgot there's no gate on this side," he said. He thought for a while.

"Come here, Son," he said to me.

I went over.

"Stand on this bottom wire," he said. I put a foot on it. "Both feet," he said.

I took the top wire with my hands, holding between the barbs, and stood as straight up on the bottom one as I could. I wavered back and forth, but I could feel the bottom wire slackening a little.

"Now," Dad said, taking hold of one of my wrists, "grab onto the middle wire." He guided my hand downward and located it on a smooth section. Hunched over, I hung there, a part of me on each wire, each one quivering under the weight, the bottom one rocking crazily. Dad took my other wrist and brought my hand down to the second wire. He placed it a foot away from my other hand. I was teetering now worse than ever, my bottom jutting out, my back aching from the sharp bend I had to make, and my forehead bobbing with every jerk of my head into the barbs of the top wire.

"Now pull up real hard," Dad said. I pulled up hard. "Son," Dad said quietly, "just try to straighten out your back, Son."

He and Nephi had the deer off the ground, ready to shoot it as far as they could through the fence as soon as I made the gap big enough to clear it. I tried to jerk erect and nearly lost my balance and felt a barb scratch across the palm of my hand as I

recovered. But I felt the gap stretch as the wire screeched through the staples on the posts.

"Atta boy, Son," Dad said.

They slipped the rack of the deer through the gap, and heaved forward. Dad jumped across the fence and grabbed the antlers. Then, as I grunted and bled on the wires, Nephi would give a heave on his end of the willow and Dad would jerk the body farther through the fence. Under my clothes I could feel little heat pricklings break out over my skin. Sweat ran from my eyebrows into my eyes, and I hung on the fence and pulled and pulled. Then, after a great heave and pull, the deer was on the other side of the fence, in the muddy plowed field we were to cross.

I unhooked myself from the fence, crawled through it, and sank down to the ground beside Dad and Nephi. I was scratched on my forehead, palms, knuckles, and now I began to chill.

"I bet we got dirt in the meat," Nephi said.

"It'll wash out," Dad said, standing up. Nephi stood up. I had just started to suck one of the biggest scratches on my hand, but I stood up, too.

It took us more than an hour to cross that field. It had been a patch of hay, but the hay had been ripped up in the early fall, and as we tried to move across it, we sank to our knees in the black gumbo that had been soaked for months by the rain and snow. Every once in a while, too, we had to rest; and we had to flounder and jerk and tug with the deer as quietly as possible because Buck's car wasn't far away, though it was so pitch dark we couldn't see it. We were mud from head to foot by the time we finally came out near the gate on the other side of the field. Dad and I crouched down beside the gummy body of the deer while Nephi went back across the plowed ground to get the pick-up.

After a while we saw the lights of our truck flip on. They moved onto the road and stopped while Nephi put up the gate. Then they moved through the night to the corner and swung in our direction. For a moment they were hidden behind Buck's car. Then they moved slower and slower past the dark car that we could see beside the road, picked up speed, and raced toward us. We put the deer in the back—all three of us hoisting hard

and it went in with one flip—and we were on our way home. I looked out the back window of the cab and there was not a sign of anything following us.

"Can't figure out what's happened to Buck," Dad said as we bounced over the washboard road. "Didn't you see hide or hair of him?" he asked Nephi.

"Not a sign," Nephi said. Then, after quite a little pause, "Nor Feenus, either."

"What d'you mean, Feenus?"

"That was Feenus's Chevy back there. Feen probably asleep in the seat."

I looked at the long scratch across the palm of my hand, a darker jagged line in the mud. "Just a harmless Joker," I said.

"That'll do, Son," Dad said in a tired voice. We just rode home after that without saying anything, feeling the mud drying stiffly in our clothes.

When we got home, the first thing Mother asked Dad was if Feenus Grimes had seen him that morning. She said he had come over to the house just before noon to ask if he could borrow the team to haul some hay he'd bought.

Dad looked around at his hands and clothes and at his two filthy, shivering sons. "He found me all right. Didn't so much as mention borrowing the team."

"He's the danglest fool," Mother said.

Nephi and I had supper and went to bed. I guess Dad and Mother worked most of the night in the pantry because next morning the deer was all cut up ready to be cured.

A couple days later when Mother tried to roast a piece of the deer, a heavy rotten smell came out of the oven. Dad took the roast out in the garden and buried it.

"Must have got froze," Mother said.

"Or heated under all that straw and canvas," Nephi said. "I don't think we could of punctured the gall sac any way."

"That stink's the stink of that black lakeside gumbo we dragged it through," Dad said, looking very sad.

He looked even sadder that night at supper when Feenus banged on the door and called out, "Hey there, Jos. Anybody home?" Mother called back for him to come into the kitchen.

"Too bad about that deer meat," he said, taking on the flat of

his hand the piece of cherry pie Mother handed him. "Do thank you, Lou." He snapped off a bite, leaving a half moon of crust back by his wrist. "Venison tricky stuff to handle and not spoil." I thought he chuckled. I guess he didn't, or Dad would have thrown the dish of boiled potatoes at him, judging from the way he was watching him all the time.

"How'd you know about that?" Nephi asked him.

"It's all over town," Feenus said. Everybody was quiet. After a couple of minutes, Mother passed the pie plate to Feenus and he took another piece.

"Say, Jos!" Feenus blurted all at once, spraying pie crumbs across the table. "You figure you got any use for that hide?"

"No he don't," Mother said quickly. "It's out in the brooder coop smelling like it belonged there. Everthing about that deer stunk."

Dad hadn't said a word to Feenus since he came in. He just sat at his place, half looking down at his plate, chewing very slowly.

"Occurred to me," Feenus said, looking off into space, "a feller might tan it up and find a use for it."

"Take it! Take it!" Mother said. "I don't know what good it'll do you."

"Much obliged," Feenus said. He walked to the door. Nobody else stirred. "Don't bother to get up," he said. "I can find the way out." He paused. "Thought I might tan it up for a lap robe to use in the Chev. Old lady's been hankerin' for one." He shook his head slowly, "Money, money, money." He opened the door. "Much obliged, Jos," he called back cheerfully; and he was gone.

We all sat looking at Dad.

"He knows the dangdest things," he said at last, quietly, as if he were daydreaming. Without paying much attention to what he was doing, he poured cream gravy over another boiled potato. "He probably knew right where that hide was, Louisa. You didn't have to tell him."

He chewed his potatoes slowly for a while. Then all at once he stood up, the chair rocking backwards, almost going over, and headed for the door. We all followed him out into the grey dusk.

"Feen!" he yelled. "Feenus!" There was nothing sad or quiet about his voice now.

We could see Feen going from the brooder coop across the lot to the lane that led up to the store and the rummy dive. He stopped.

"Yeah, Jos?" he called back. "I leave something back there?"

"Come here, Feenus," Dad said, walking toward him. The rest of us stood beneath the locust tree in the front yard. Feen walked back toward Dad.

"I'll just take that hide, Feen," Dad said.

"Now what the Sam Hill's he thinkin' about?" Mother said.

"Putter, may be," Nephi said.

"Talk sense, Son," Mother said.

"Give it to me, Feen," we heard Dad say.

"Well, I'll be go to hell," Feen said. "Dincha hear Louisa say I—"

"I want that skin, Feen," Dad said again. "Just hand it right here."

We saw Feen lean over and put the hide at Dad's feet.

"Reckon I'll have to buy me one of them fancy store robes, then. Money, money, money." He left without another word.

When Dad, carrying the hide, came back to us under the locust tree, he had a strange set to his jaw, and when Mother asked him, "Now you got that stinkin' old pelt, what d'you think you'll do with it," he just said, "That guy don't know when a joke's gone too far." He turned away and carried it back to the empty brooder coop where it had been. The rest of us went into the house to eat what pie Feenus had left.

A day or so later when I went with Dad and Nephi to the barn to milk, I noticed the deer hide, still smelly and still caked with mud, nailed over a place in the side wall of the stable where a breachy cow had broken a board and kicked part of it off. And all that night and for all the other nights of my years at home, as I glanced out of the corner of my eyes when I had my head pressed into the flank of the cow I was milking, I could see that dirty, yellow-brown hide hanging there, sometimes flapping at its loose edges from the wind outside, drying, crackling, withering away in the smelly air of the old barn.

• DAVID CORNEL DEJONG

SEASON'S GREETING

When you write a holiday note
to your old teacher reminding
her again it was you who filled
her inkpot, tell her
of your recent trip to Dallas,
where there are no mountains,
and say: but for you I might
have become a spelunker or
a trapper of eels, but for you
I'd be thrown from a taproom
like a leaking bucket.
And privately you grin
her grins which always wizened
before less than half
of the arithmetic hour was over.

And recall the knotty swing
beneath the locust tree,
a pendulum in and out of
locust scents and duty,
from which you watched
her writing adages on
the blackboard, meant to teach
you that life was earnest
to the bone, to the marrow.
You learned so on the hour,
on the half hour next, and soon
on the minute when you aged,
and now like a clock you are
primed always for Christmas,
and could ever carol:
"In a cradle the meek one lay."
And with glasses tilted
peer into the blue eyes
of yore, and shake your bones
like a rattle nostalgically.

THE SAINT

By GUNILLA B. NORRIS

As he walked along Strandvägen, Mons remembered a fellow newspaper man having joked with him.

"With your ideals, old boy," he had said, "you'd have to find a saint!"

Mons thought, "Yes, that's what I need to find. Someone really fine." It was late afternoon, and the sky hung low over Stockholm. Mons felt the cold wind sweep across his head leaving his ears burning. Though he had nowhere to go he walked purposefully with a long determined stride. It was the windy weather that urged him on more and more rapidly. By the very straining of his thighs he thought to destroy the gnawing restlessness that had sent him out on the street.

Suddenly he stopped. The wind went past him further down the street. He stopped because there was no reason for his rapid stride. The very purposelessness of his walk troubled him. If only he could find someone or something really worthwhile. He turned into a side street to get out of the wind. A small unimaginative sign hung straight above him. "Smörgås" it said. He entered.

Several men sat over coffee. Their eyes had a look of physical weariness, and their hands were clumsy as they turned the pages of the evening paper. Mons sat down at a corner table. He was glad to be inside. He watched the men mumbling quietly to each other. They looked like masons he thought. All at once the wide face of the waitress hung above him.

"What'll it be?" she asked.

"Kaffe och weinerbröd."

She scribbled the order and Mons found himself watching her walk away to the kitchen. She swayed easily between the tables and disappeared. He felt distracted. He wished he had a paper to hold between his hands. The little cafe was clean and barren. He felt surrounded by the uniform tables and the coldness of the room. Its very whiteness broke upon him and he closed his eyes.

"Here's your coffee," he heard the waitress say, and when he

looked up she seemed for a moment to stand in a mist of golden light. He was almost afraid to look again. He blinked and noticed immediately that she had a very plain face surrounded by a great mass of blond hair. He was relieved. Two rather bizarre earrings of emerald green swung haphazardly from her ears.

"That'll be a crown," she said, breaking in upon his scrutiny. She left him with his coffee and went over to the men. One of them stretched out his arm and pulled her over to him.

"How are you, Greta?" he said.

She smiled and nodded, slipping the arm from around her waist as though he had never touched her. Mons noticed no offense in her face.

"She's either damn callous or else she's a saint," he thought.

He became absorbed in watching her. She was of a medium height, wearing a light wool dress. Her movements were heavy yet graceful. Watching her his eyes blurred. He thought he saw her dancing slowly between the square tables. It was an odd and beautiful dance. With his unfocused eyes he saw that she was different. But suddenly the emerald earrings swung past him and he felt angry.

"It's just as well," he thought. "She's only a waitress."

Outside it had begun snowing. Through the window he watched the flakes tumble down and blow along the curb. He didn't want to go outside. It looked cold, and he felt again that slow despair that had sent him out on the streets.

"It's all so ugly," he thought. "Life is an ugly joke on us all." He laughed quietly. He heard the masons leave. The wind swept into the lunch room as the door closed. He knew he would have to leave soon.

"I hate to make you go," the waitress said standing next to him. "The shop closes at six." Her voice had a deep rich tone. He looked up slowly, unwilling to see the emerald earrings. He knew he would ask her to go somewhere with him.

"Your name is Greta, isn't it? Mine is Mons. Will you have dinner with me?" It all tumbled out of him so fast he caught his breath.

She laughed gently. "But I don't know you."

"That doesn't matter. Please come." He hated to be pleading with her.

She looked at him slowly. Her eyes were far apart, and he couldn't bear their penetration.

"All right," she said. "I'll get my coat."

She locked the door behind her, and they stood a moment in the street. The smell of winter clung to his nostrils.

"Can we walk?" he asked. "It's nice out."

She nodded, and they set off down the street. He felt her hip swaying easily by his side. From the corner of his eye he saw her face. It was open, almost expressionless, except that it seemed to welcome the snow. Her walk was smooth next to his. He was awkward and stiff in comparison.

They walked to the Old Town. At the restaurant he took her coat. She was out of breath. The small line of perspiration that hung on her upper lip attracted him. The small manager showed them through a quiet, conservative room.

"Order anything," Mons said when they sat down.

"Meatballs," she said.

He looked up startled. "In a French restaurant?"

She nodded and looked intently at the white table cloth.

"Filet of Sole," he announced to the waiter.

They were silent a moment.

"Well, tell me about yourself," he said, turning to her.

She sat quietly, all the grace seemed to have gone out of her. Mons noticed again the swinging of her earrings.

"Would you take those damn things off?" he said, pointing to the earrings.

"Why?" she said. "I like them."

"They're hideous."

Her hand reached up as if she were going to remove them, but she changed her mind.

"I don't want to take them off. They were given me by a friend," she said. "You'll just have to forget them."

He was angry and regretted asking her to go with him. She was not the girl he had seen in the coffee shop. Her broad, flushed face offended him.

"If you didn't like the earrings, why did you ask me out to dinner?" she asked.

"I liked you," he said.

She laughed a deep laugh. He felt his face grow red with

THE CARLETON MISCELLANY

anger. He didn't like her at all. He didn't know why he had ever asked her in the first place.

"I'm glad you find me so amusing," he said. "If I were you, I'd be surprised to be asked out by anyone."

She turned white. Her face seemed to go blank. She rose, and with a slow determination she turned her back on him. Mons watched her walking out. His heart shrank within him.

"Oh well," he thought and sat fixedly in his chair. "Why should I go after her? . . . There's no reason to." He had only asked her out on the spur of the moment. If she could accept a stranger's invitation, then she wasn't worth it.

He found himself out on the side walk. He hurried against the wind, pushing through the dark night.

"Damn the earrings!" he said to himself. The pit of his stomach was a riot. "All right—so I was an ass."

He caught a streetcar and watched the blank faces staring out into the night. Why was it all so ugly? The street lights passed in a blur, and he saw the winter trees twisted black in the park.

He jumped off the streetcar and hurried along Strandvägen. He turned up a side street and knocked on the coffee shop door. It was dark. He pounded with his fist. There was a chance that she lived in the back part of the store.

"Greta!" he cried. "Open up!"

A light went on in the back. He saw her coming to the door. She was wrapped in a bathrobe. Her hair hung loosely around her face. She opened the door and stepped back when she saw him.

"What do you want?"

"I'm sorry," he said, "I was rude. Will you talk to me?"

She looked at him a moment and motioned him into the back part of the house. Her room was small and comfortable. She pointed out a chair for him.

"What do you want?" she repeated.

He felt foolish. "I'm lonely," he said.

"Well, take your sorrows somewhere else," she said. "I don't intend to be offended again."

"Greta, I'm sorry. It was none of my business about the earrings."

They sat quietly in the dim room. She was huddled on the

corner of the bed, watching him with her wide eyes.

"The men I know," she said out into the room, "might be plain people, but they don't insult women."

He bit his lip with anger. "I said I was sorry."

She stood up. "Want coffee?"

"Yes. Thanks."

She disappeared. The smell of coffee came from the kitchen. She returned with her hair combed. He could see the outline of her full body in the loose bathrobe. She moved about the room with her easy motion getting out the cups. Mons watched her in silence.

"You live here by yourself?" he asked.

She nodded. "I inherited the shop from Mom and Dad."

"Have you ever thought of doing anything else?"

She shook her head. "Why should I? I like this."

"But it's so menial and ugly," he said.

"What do you do then?" she asked standing above him. Her eyes glittered with a strange light.

"I'm a columnist."

"What's so grand about that?"

He shook his head. "Nothing, I guess."

They looked at each other quietly.

"I don't even like it," he added.

She brought the coffee. "You know," he said, "For a moment in the shop you looked like a saint to me."

She laughed loudly. The sound jarred against him.

"Why do you laugh like that?" he asked.

"Like what?"

"Like a donkey."

She stared at him. "I'm sorry," he said. He hated himself. She turned her back on him and sat down on the corner of the bed. Mons could still see her face. She looked like a child, angry and flushed.

"I'm sorry," he repeated.

"Just leave. I won't take a beating in my own house."

Mons watched her. Her hair stood out in abundance around her face. He thought she was beautiful.

"I'm sorry," he said going over to her.

"You're really low."

"I know it."

"You're the lowest I've ever met." She looked up at him. She had tears in her eyes, but she smiled. He grinned and looked down at her hair. It glistened in the dim room. Her full figure seemed to be illumined from some hidden source. He felt suddenly warm and shy.

"You're the first saint I've ever met."

She smiled and stretched her hand out to him. "Well, good night," she said.

He bent over and kissed it. "Good night."

● HENRY BIRNBAUM

A WREATH OF WORDS

That room had turned sudden and strange, too still
where he died, his stilled body rolled out,
and the walls remaining high and hard
with those quick memories there. That room
straining for freedom, enclosed emptiness,
an unused form finding space too large
for practical things: a glass waiting
near its bent straw, the lamp burning
in isolation, and sheets crumbled in a quiet
corner. All those serviceable needs
for which life was made seem afraid of death.

Yet death is there, or was, because
 it would not stay, having taken from its bed
 the claim. And what remained was absence
 of being, an early sense of past tenses.
 Unsight has no use for mirrors, nor stillness
 for light. Then make it dark. Give darkness
 a resting place where silence may sit
 unbelieving, where night enters not,
 where night never leaves. Blackness
 has its forms. Like strands over timelessness,
 the forms twist inward, like wet hair
 streaked over the face of silence.

Timelessness: a state beyond dimension,
 like a shadow of flowers cast upon a wall
 without body or hue: that almost tangible
 neverthereness. Of no time now, neither
 of beginning nor end. There in a suspension
 of what is known, we make ourselves ready
 for whispering. Our voices find slow
 companions for grief. Words have their stations,
 standing with us in loneliness, they come
 bravely to centers of stone-marked fields
 and free us into a briefly carved epitaph.

Elegies have their forms: the invocation,
 the quivering threnody, the willful song
 rising from emptiness to throbbing display.
 Formal grief. Milton must have understood
 its pastoral mending, the militant unbending
 of silence. Grieving has its traditional
 turns, the curve round the brink
 of the void, ending in a sobbing away.
 The forms bring us so quickly to the grave
 that these words, still unblossomed, lie
 more like a wreath of what is left unsaid,
 dear Michael, so unspeakably dead.

● HAROLD WITT

THOSE GREEKS

valued balance, believed in physiques
equally tapered like vases on which in a frieze
ebullient longlegged leapers with waists of ease
danced in nude proportion to the flute.
Theorems of Pythagoras in stone,
their geometric temples please us yet.
Their more than natural statues almost pulse—
one poises centuries, about to throw a disc,
another is a goddess, but her face
so woman wonderful we ask what priestess breathes
smiling alive behind the ideal mask.

A certain permanence, a lissomness that lasts
—robes rippling, flower crowned drinkers dipping cups
in a krater (eras later chipped and cracked,
showing us slender hounds that pounce on Acteon,
and outraged Artemis graceful in her gown)
or muscular wrestlers glistening as they grasp—
pervades the faded grandeur that was Grecian.
They come on marble horses and their drapes
cling with curve and purpose, a design
improving with exulted human shapes
the lucid blue vast scoop of emptiness.

Not until convinced against the gods,
Poseidon and his trident washing up,
with bubbling knuckles and a beard of crabs,
on a beach beyond the reach of their belief
while Zeus on Olympus like the Laocoön
struggled with the strangling snakes of doubt,
did something shift, the confidence within
begin to break and shake great pillars down.
Without that faith, they crouched in Plato's cave,
by tragic logic shrunk to pitiful man—
distorted shadow of a form beyond.

HEAVY INTERRUPTER

By GERALD GUIDERA

Probably all of us have been subject to distracting flashes of memory in which a massed sense of a past experience will seem to rise and come together like a high instant of lights on an eddy, then race back to its parts before the eyes can be brought to focus on it directly, before it can be apprehended and coped with. Although I have always considered myself to be in exceptionally close touch with the present and its concerns, I must admit with disturbance that I, myself, fell victim to a moment of detachment recently, and at a sensitive point in an examination I was performing on a patient for a fellow throat specialist. Leaving the field is dangerous enough when one's attention to a patient is neglected, but the lapse I refer to is made more precipitous by the fact that it occurred when the patient—a throat cancer—had just made a clear request for euthanasia.

Since the charge of this patient technically belongs now, as then, not to me, but to an absent colleague, I consider any fault in my attention to be especially unfortunate. It is disturbing for one to consider that his professional impersonality may be impaired, and that he may be stooping—consciously or unconsciously—to the cavalier. Perhaps my newness to him explains the patient's behavior; he might have become emboldened, seeing in attendance a different doctor from the one who daily wrought to extend his pained life, and had ventured to me his unsettling request for ease. Whether I was affected by the man's desire for death or by the way he expressed it—more like a command than a plea, as if he had trained me for his errand and had measured my response—I am not yet sure. But I was to be completely (I hesitate before the English word) *transported* through eighteen years and five thousand miles, and for a moment my feet stood heavy on German ground and my eyes were fixed before my feet; and here in the great clinic at Rochester, the air before me and the patient's mouth or arm or chest were investigated by a

disembodied limb. I stopped like a printed word when his pale eyes tracked me as I was preparing a sedative, when they commanded in whatever voice his scored whisper lacked: "Take no more than 150cc. of morphine from the vial, but draw the syringe open. Give me air, doctor! Air is what I need to end this cancer." Then he offered me a monstrous bequest — for "medical research."

I was not immediately abstracted from my business but was immediately affected nevertheless. I became in a wave very conscious of myself and of what I was doing, and then, as quickly, not. The very familiar structure of a patient neat in a white-covered bed in a green room softly lighted by a blinded window had to be separated and counted and the total absorbed, which was to me as if I had suddenly forgotten the number of my fingers. I almost dreamed that I was taken from my flesh and that I might well turn and observe its actions with complete objectivity, without responsibility for them. I recognized the feeling instantly, and then miles and years turned sideways; I had not felt so strangely next to myself since a particular day during my internment at Dachau, a day that stands apart in a period of my life that was weird enough, since I, a Jew, did not live in the open compounds with the others, but had a private stall in a shed adjoining the headquarters building. This dim isolation befell me because while moving on clerical rollers toward death in the gas chamber, I had been pressed into labor within its very tallow walls whenever others preceded me. My training made me useful there, because wherever there is orderly execution—and I've seen it's the same in this country—a doctor is needed, not to save the life of the subject of course, but to attest to his death. For such final examinations, as well as for those given to all people entering the camp, the government maintained a staff of five physicians at Dachau, including the commanding officer—a Gentile, of course—whose army rank was Major-doktor, and four underlings who were Jews, once welcomed and trained in the best medical academies at Leipzig and Berlin.

Since I was one selected for the small corps and it was effici-

ent to keep the same men in such necessary positions for extensive periods of time, what I did there, my function, was expected to keep me, like the other Jewish doctors, alive—at least until the central filing machinery should have me replaced or have done with the position entirely.

The cycle of my job began, I suppose, with a wait of approximately twenty-eight minutes while the gas—potassium cyanide gas after some experimentation with cheaper agents—took effect. Then I formed ranks with four or five porters and tooth pullers in the corridor, and we all silently addressed the steel door to the chamber, while inside, the ceiling jets which had shot the gas in earlier forced in clean air, while exhaust fans in the walls drew out the noxious content. When it was safe for the door to be opened, we entered and set to our tasks. The tooth pullers searched each mouth for gold, which they extracted and turned over for smelting and appropriation to the Reichsschatz. The porters always went directly to the large door in the rear which opened onto a loading platform extending outside of the building. The truck would always be waiting when the doors opened, backed to the short ledge of the platform, and readied with its gates open. I knew the driver must have been an habitually prompt individual, because he was always waiting there, although I never got more than a spectral glimpse of the back of his head and an ear through the cab's oval window, since he never stepped down or turned to those behind him. The porters would always start with the bodies nearest the loading platform and work into the room; it seemed as if they were the sea itself, gaining advantage on the shingled world, undercutting, then drawing all out through that door. As they progressed toward the farthest corners, one could almost imagine that they were weakening the foundations of the room and that those yellow, tiled walls would soon be belched in by their own weight. Before any bodies were removed, however, the number of each one had to be checked against a mass-death form, typed out during the twenty-eight minutes the chamber was in use. The typing was done by a clerk who was given a list of the numbers of the

people who entered what they were told was a "disinfectant shower." The clerk checked these against the list sent to his office direct from Berlin. I checked the list inside the chamber and thus initiated formal death certificates which would be forwarded as last entries for each of the individual files in Berlin. The porters usually waited until I was about one-half finished with the bodies—usually thirty to forty—before they began to remove the ones that had been checked. This was because they were able to perform their job in much less time than mine took. I observed more than once that while they waited—thirty minutes more or less—they never seemed to look at me to notice how far along I was. They took orders neither from the driver of the truck, who never even called to them any more than they to him, nor from anyone, as far as I could see. They just stood there by the door, and if they ever looked at each other, I never saw the glance, and if they ever spoke to each other, I never heard the word. Yet, if it occurred to me to look their way when I was half finished, I would see them moving toward the great door with a burden, looking directly forward and wearing the expressions of men with no faces.

It was not difficult for me to avoid looking at my working companions, because it was necessary there for me to be constantly bending over. I examined each of the bodies on the floor with a stethoscope, and when the elementary check showed no pulse, I noted the number inked into the skin and made a check next to this number where it appeared on the mass-death form. Then I turned again to the bearer of the number, and for my last act in each case, I was humiliatingly forced to carry a pot of black paint and a brush, with which I painted bold across the shaven scalp a cross—an "X"—a mark to indicate to those who followed behind me that they might remove this certified corpse. I found the demoralization nearly complete in that act, in that paint pot. There a man was forced to crumple whatever honest pride he might have in his university training and his publications, dip it in a pot of defacement, and smear with it on the head of a corpse. You will excuse, I hope, the exaggerated fig-

ures of speech, but I had won competitions, and was then being forced, I felt, to hang the ribbons I'd earned from a hook at the waist of a work-suit, where they drooped in a pot of black paint. When I think of it now, from the outside, it seems to me that the workers in that room must have looked like some strange cultivators, all dressed in striped work-suits with rimless caps. There I stooped and pressed and daubed now and again, and the porters loaded, and the tooth pullers!—these, like dentists of another world, grunted, yanked, and even hurled themselves backward sometimes against their braced feet, and plunked the nuggets into chamois bags slung from their necks. The wretched golden teeth, as if hungry for a last word, would fall among a few others say “knuckle”, or in a full bag “teeth”, or falling in an empty bag would venture only a discrete cough. The tooth pullers were always large laborers, and like the porters impressed from Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia. Jews were not permitted to handle gold. Jews—these attitudes on the floor—these were my people according to the government. Well, they might have been. I never cared a great deal for what I consider to be gratuitous affiliations of race and I have considered myself independent of all blood ties since the university days when my work, though merely forming then, told me intimately that it would mature. Although I never necessarily preferred Jewish society to any other, it seemed at that time very likely that the Jews at my feet would number me permanently among them. In fact, I am sure that they would have, except for the breakdown of the central communications system and the subsequent deterioration of order when the Allies crossed the Rhine. When that occurred, the gas chamber and the kitchens ceased their own functions almost simultaneously. Before that relief, however, I wore a striped working-suit and a brimless cap, and no matter whose people they were, I was not sorry to have galoshes over my shoes as I moved about that floor, stooping, searching for a heart beat among the naked dead.

Incredibly, I found just this phenomenon in a rickety girl, who was probably some fifteen or sixteen when she entered the

gas chamber. She lived through her stay there because of a hideous pile of her uncles and fathers and sisters which lay on top of her, crushing her face almost flat against the tile floor. Such weight would seem almost enough in itself to crush the life out of her, but it was distributed in such a protective mass that the unfortunate girl, apparently the first to fall, was trapped with a pocket of air which she breathed unknowing.

I examined each body as I came to it and rolled it from the ones below that I might examine them. For a short time after I discovered the living girl in their matrix, I think my memory attributed their chance and ugly tumbles from the pile to art, for the bodies as I moved them formed a circle about her—an arena, as it were, for her discovery. But there was no flourish when I touched and listened to that weak heartbeat. I instantly recoiled from the foreigner and once again listened at the chest of the old man whose head I had just marked "X." Like a film run suddenly backwards, or like a target bear in an amusement arcade when he is shot by a beam of light, I had whirled in reverse on my path, expressionless. Oddly, I think it was only then with my ear to a stone that I was able to hear that mortal heartbeat. Then I felt suddenly self-conscious listening at the marked man's chest, and I turned once again to the girl. I tried to listen quickly for an increase in pulse rate and at the same time to appear dull to anyone who might be looking. Think of trying to appear dull: does anyone attempt this art who has not undergone silent training; and how does he attempt it when he has heard what has been silent? The respiration, I found, was weak, but it was becoming noticeable, and with the child relieved of the weight of her relatives, it could be expected to improve steadily.

I turned toward another shape on the floor, but I had to come to a halt. I'm sure I never phrased the question to myself about what I should do, and I probably would be tempted now to say that I acted instantly and to forget that I stood still there, looking for a few moments at the wall directly before me, were it not that I remember being startled by the presence of an insect. Blank, I must have risen to look at the yellow tiles of the wall

and the gray mortar that spaced and supported them, and to muse on them, asking no question and receiving no answer. I can not say the caterpillar appeared there suddenly, because that would be ludicrous, but it seemed sudden to me when the furry creature inched down the wall into the scope of my sight. Where did he come from? And so slow—how long he must have been there! An insect may seem to you a strange and incongruous subject of recollection under the circumstances, but perhaps you will try to imagine my surprise, toned as it was—even till then—by so many certainties: a yellow and black caterpillar, fat and confident in some vegetable purpose, in that place was a Martian! or a Venusian, or a Moon-dweller, and his diagonal split the death chamber's wall.

I immediately removed the girl. I bent—without any conscious concern, then or later, as it seems to me now—and even made a grunt as I scooped her unevenly into my arms and picked my way across the floor to the entrance door, still open. The tooth-pullers were sedulously bent and the porters were moving toward the door at the rear. If any of them saw my trek, they kept whatever hideous thoughts they might have had to themselves. I am sure, furthermore, that if they were aware of me, they did not allow that fact to interfere with their work.

Outside the entrance to the chamber, I carried the awkward shape bobbling and swinging down the wide corridor which ran the considerable length of the building's rear wall from the chamber to the "dressing room" at the other end—where the people had been stripped—and beyond that to a door leading outside. I would have been quite an apparition—or a vision—to any clerk coming upon me in the length of that hall, but I was not seen. There were offices lined along the corridor with thin half-walls and frosted glass to the ceiling and the sounds of typewriters drummed in front of me and behind in its hollow. But this, I think, was a back wall of all these offices, and to my knowledge, none of their doors on the corridor ever opened and none of the clerks ever walked there. I opened the fire door at the end of the hall by leaning against it. Then I crossed directly

the short open space between this and the entrance to the living shed. Although it was not cold, being late spring, and I was, of course, normally covered, I might have felt the naked air in sympathy before I merged into the dim shed. There was no door although the frame existed, so a side-step there did not slow my march. Inside, I stumped down another deserted corridor to my stall, down the gallery of packed dirt, pitted but swept smooth, before the stalls of haircutters and toothpullers and porters and the other doctors, without a thought to lighten or deaden the burden under which I staggered. Puffing at the door—or lid—to my stall, I was just able with my elbow to lever it open; then I bumped in, especially clumsy here for some reason. The sill in that doorway raised exactly five and one-half inches over the packed dirt. It was two steps from the door to my bed, and there I rolled her on top of the blanket, and catching myself, leaned heavily on the cot's iron side-rail a moment. Probably at that point, I was breathing heavily down on the girl's abdomen, but I was temporarily unable to raise my head. When I recovered, I pushed myself backward and reached above my head in the dark for the light string, although the stall was so bare and narrow that I never needed the light to discover anything's location. I switched it off again in a moment and stepped back toward the completion of my day's assignment in the gas chamber. Of course, I did not wish to seem out of order in my work, and therefore could afford no further delay since the porters hurried and would soon catch up to me. Her nipples were the color of her eyelids.

It may have been difficult for me to maintain a normal rate of work through the next half-hour; I don't know. I don't remember; although I am sure that if I shammed, I was successful, since the process of the gas chamber had become quite a matter of course with me. When one space on the form remained blank at the end, I checked it like the others, as if it had meant no more than they, and turned in the form to the typists with my initials on it. In an hour or so—usually a reprieve for me—they would have the individual death certificates prepared, which I was required to sign before they could be dispatched to Berlin.

Of course I made my way to the shed as soon as I had initialed the general form, although I could not have reasonably expected peace for much of that hour under the circumstances. But I do not think that duration was important, or that consequence was considered.

When I stepped through my door, I closed it like a miser before I reached for the light, and in the dark my eyes located the hoard, and they were there when the light fell on her. For an instant before she blinked, her eyes were directly on mine. Then she struggled to open them against the light, but did not move otherwise. Her body, as might be expected, was waxy-colored with weakness and fear. I compared her length against the iron cot and was surprised that in spite of her bowed legs, she was about seventy inches long. Although she did not give the impression of rigidity, her body seemed attenuated: her arms lay along her sides and her fingers were loosely straight, not curled; her ankles were curiously turned down and her feet stretched to just the end of the bed as if she had stopped suddenly in the act of playing her yellow toes over the cold hollow steel of the foot-bar. Her eyes were the ordinary brown with the pupils contracted, but they seemed to tax the restraining power of her bony face, and unblinking now, they pressed into mine. I looked at her chest as I tested with my stethoscope and at the white rings the instrument made. Her pulse was quite rapid, but by contrast her respiration was barely visible; she was in an unflinching paroxysm of fear—a funk. I was about to cover her with the blanket she lay on when

snap! snap!

came from beyond the doorway.

I shall never decide whether the sound was a rap against the door-jamb, or a frozen slap of a crop against a boot, or an even more subtle command such as the tap of a heel on the packed earth might be to the ear that listens for it. I opened the door. The *Major-doktor* stood there perfectly erect, enveloped in his own ineffable Duty. His eyes showed the cold horizon of great agitation controlled by that patience born of superiority. A dis-

order was evident only in his dress where an open holster and automatic had been buckled temporarily over the blouse of an otherwise unwrinkled uniform. He had expected to pass an afternoon in München—as much a “bore” as he called that—and had been delayed by the business in which I had become involved; as evidence of his diverted plan, he still carried a crop in his left hand, but not a baton like the other officers, although as a *Major*, he might have displayed one wrapped in fine black leather with an ivory tip.

“The count was short by one. You know you should have reported *this* immediately.” He turned smartly a degree and dispatched her with his pistol. Then he rendered thirty seconds of acute official annoyance, but the tedious patience in tempered tones allowed no threat to spring, no punishment to squash. His understanding was that trenchant, his purpose that sure.

I had glanced back at her in reflex when I saw him in the doorway. Though one would expect that we would seem enemies alike to her, at his coming she had flickered to the bed’s edge with her feet touching the floor. Her lips drew back from her teeth and her chin lowered. Her pupils were black moons. When I looked again, the weight of the bullets had upended her over the head of the cot. Movement had all but stopped, but a mad ringing had continued for a moment in my ears. Her fingers had been clutched white on the bedside; perhaps yanked free they had made the bar ring. Or perhaps that was the ring the Rock of Life makes when it throws back the sword, eh? I doubt it. It was from the explosion. And just one leaden bird had flown a short clatter to the dark corner beyond my bed, where her limbs slowly melted, and her face was hidden beyond memory in her fathers’ centuries.

“... And there is your pleasure for you doctor!” The *Major-doktor* concluded, reversed and stepped off from the open door without ever having crossed its sill. I was, I felt, surrounded, overcome then briefly by the sound and motion of a moment’s violence, by a diminishing uniform and the click the packed earth made—by things that are not a rock nor the ring of a sword

sprung back. It was certain that the porters would file through that far door within two minutes and approach my stall. I think I hated them more than I could have hated the figure that presently disappeared from sight. I feared them. (Perhaps that is what brought the whole incident to mind; perhaps I heard something even in the clinic that sounded like their march coming to remove the body.)

I turned again into the dark stall: her poor palms had wrapped so tight and blanched around the cold metal of the bed. Did they freeze on there to be torn away like the tongues of unlucky cows that touch iron in winter time? Was her skin still gripped there? Just then the room was green again and bright with blinded light and the bed was white:

“... for Mercy, doctor!”

What was I to say? I gripped his miserable arm.

“I am not your proper doctor, my good man.” Then, realizing this mistake, I hastened to assure him that he would be feeling better when the shot took effect.



● THOMAS WHITBREAD

WORDS AND THE LOVER

He came reluctantly to an end of talking,
The conversationalist, although not done
Bagging his deer, the live words he was stalking,
The gamey, seasonable flesh, to stun

His listeners' tongues, to make his speech worth eating,
His compendious sentences bear the test of teeth.
June did it, June accomplished his defeating,
Tilted her head incisively beneath

The wordy taffy he had started throwing
From his chair to the lovers on the couch.
June bit into his discourse, stopped its flowing,
Pronounced it pallid, with a verbal slouch

Asked for some music, any music. Smiling,
He turned his hi-fi on. What could he do?
Perhaps she would find his records more beguiling
Than the talk so truly banal, yet so true,

That he had aimed over her hair so shining
To the to-be-married couple: talk of love
As the only answer to all human pining
And the end of speaking: aimed not far above,
Not far. Had he found the blood-words he was hunting
To pour down her upturned throat, instead of these
Which she distasted as sententious stunting!
But now:

May I play you Mozart?

If you please.

THE FREEZER BANDIT

By JAMES B. HALL

See the boy's picture on page one but not me. Why?

Why not see this building from the outside where arrow points to window, or interior where he calmly awaits or see about my important work which people do not realize. Important but people do not *realize* the whole *Truth*. Why?

Why because you don't know it but every week in the papers you have been reading about my work. And I'll tell you the real Truth: ever see those advertisements for a Freezer Plan?

I know all about the terms and the deal because I telephone the salesmen and ask them to come to my room, right here on Front Street, beside the river. When the salesmen come up the stairs I say I have been reading their ads.

"Good, good," they all say, and they unbuckle the brief case and begin to scatter literature on the floor of my room.

"Save you thirty two percent on your food bills," they say, but I get them started on the freezer itself, about the lights inside. And about the door lock.

You would be surprised how many women sell freezers and *not one* ever asks about my family or what am I going to feed. I live alone and yet I want the side of beef, but they are so intent on their own profit they never think to help others. Why? Even if I do live alone and have no family at all you can't accuse me of being selfish.

And then I say, "Could you name a satisfied customer?"

You would be surprised how many names they give me for my list.

After these salesmen leave I sit in the dark and stare at the four-color literature scattered on the floor. Barefooted, I walk on the pictures of all those different freezers. In the darkness you can imagine that pictures are the real thing.

Also my outside work.

The freezer-plan people have two plants here in the city. Very early on nice days I go to their Eastside plant. A food-plan delivery truck will stop about twenty minutes to service a home

freezer. Once I pick up the driver's route I can walk along behind and note down the house numbers. I never loiter but I see things, and you would be surprised how many people—men and women—keep a freezer *in the basement*. Naturally that means a nice driveway, and a side door. If a dog I mark "D" on my list.

Sometimes during the week I transfer all my numbers to a map of the city which I keep on the wall of my room. That gives me a *plan* of my own. When I get a nice pattern of numbers say out in Dolphwood, or Linden Acres, I begin to walk at night.

You would be surprised what you see through their windows. Maybe the other ones I pass also walking at night would do it, but I never leave the sidewalks unless I intend to see their freezer. It's a rule. Also I never loiter. Just the same, you can see plenty.

The other night I saw a dog run across a picture window. Right behind the dog I saw this woman, with a robe on, chasing the dog. Now did she want the dog, or had it done something on the floor, or had she caught it sniffing around her freezer, or what?

My patterns on my map tell me which streets to walk. I carry a self-addressed package because in case I am stopped for identification purposes only I am out mailing something, see? I have never been stopped or molested in any way in those new areas where all the freezers are, but just the same I carry a package all wrapped and stamped even at two o'clock in the morning. Probably you have seen me walking out there sometime but just didn't know who it was.

Well, pretty soon I know by sight all of the houses on my list in, say, Linden Acres.

This next step in my important work may seem a little unusual. In fact I myself know better ways to determine which place I want to enter, to see their freezer. For example, I could telephone to find if anyone is home, etc. etc. But here is the way I actually work. After walking at night for a couple of weeks, I begin to *know* which places are ready for me. Perhaps it is the shape of the roof or a gable thrust up towards the sky or perhaps it's the curved vaginal shape of the driveway which tells me. But when I walk past a house for perhaps the tenth time, I

know. At this moment I get a feeling of satisfaction, as though I have already seen their freezer. After I get that feeling, nothing can keep me out.

Not that I'm a nut, or anything like that, but normally speaking, I'll see their freezer. Afterall I'm only human, so you can't expect the impossible.

When I *know* a place is ready for me I go back across town to my room to get my tools.

When you are in your room beside the river with the shade pulled down and when you open your closet and lay your suit on the bed and when you remove the secret plywood panel in the back of the closet you can bring out your tools; it is the beginning. Many a time I have pulled on my pig skin work gloves and have stood in the center of this room with the automobile jack in my hand. Just standing there for a moment gives you a funny feeling, something very much like the satisfaction of knowing a basement is ready for you.

All my tools fit into the suitcases. I constructed the suitcases especially to fit the tools (regards length, balance, etc.). Those two suitcases appear very heavy, and I've caught people staring when I carry them through a crowd. Actually those people who stare are wrong. My two foil-lined cases are very light, and the little straps on the inside keep my pinch bars and speed drill in place.

With a suitcase in each hand I walk back across town. When I get closer to the places I have in mind, I keep to the side streets and I make myself take very short steps.

Very slowly, I walk past once, to let the house decide. If the car is gone, that's a good sign. But if ever I start up the drive I go quickly and directly to the basement door. And I'll tell you one thing: a lot of people out in Trotwood leave their basement doors unlocked. This makes me sore. Everyone ought to lock up, especially if they have kids or a freezer.

For a moment beside the locked door in the darkness, it is nice. But I get out the pinch or the key ring or the glass cutter and my putty knife. If the door says no one is home at all I don't mind a little noise. Did you ever put a bumper jack against a really solid door and then work the handle back and forth until there is a shiver, and the splinter, inside, of a door jamb?

The moment I push the suitcase through a splintered door and walk into a basement, I can always see a freezer of any kind—chest, upright, or what have you.

Regards freezers. All freezers have locks, let's say. The lock is usually right in the handle and the manufacturer and the manufacturer's engineers actually put the lock in the handle *to be locked*. I've read all the factory manuals and I've borrowed lots of booklets out of the freezers which are on the floors of appliance shops and in every case the manufacturer intended the lock *to be used*. Those locks make a lot of sense. They keep out Unauthorized Personnel. When I, myself, have a real freezer I will certainly keep it locked At All Times.

Well, you feel all over the box. You see the kind of wall which is behind and the kind of floor underneath. On a chest-type you simply put the automobile jack on the floor, and then work the handle of the jack back and forth. The freezer is heavy, and you can feel the lid begin to quiver. Then everything lets go.

With an upright, it is different. You feel all over the box and you secure the box with the little windlass and the stainless steel cables and you use the wedge and keepers so the jack can get some purchase on the door. Then you work the jack handle back and forth and back and forth and the big flat door begins to quiver. *Whoomh*, everything lets go.

The light inside the freezer comes on, and the cold rush of air flows out and around your feet as though you were standing suddenly in cold water which you can not actually see near the ocean. At that moment the motor begins to race, as though it is frightened. You have done it again.

You see everything: the frosty shelves, the aluminum grills, and baskets, and coils that curl around the frozen packages and shimmer in the light. For just a second I stand there in the shadows, when I put away my tools. I keep one eye on that frozen world, the gorge, the cold antiseptic landscape of an opened freezer there in its own approving light. *Yes*.

You see three kinds of freezers. First, they may be full of homemade stuff, cookie dough, etc. etc. and it is not neat or orderly. They could get in on a Food Plan but they don't. Why?

The second kind of freezer is the way the brochures show it:

orange juice, grapefruit juice, grape juice, pineapple juice, orange-grapefruit-pineapple juice, mixed in one can, and all in even rows. Then the broccoli and asparagus and French-cut or Regular beans, and Brussel sprouts, and black-eyed peas and regular peas and carrots and peas mixed. Then the frozen grits, and TV dinners, and Italian Plates, and Mexican Plates, the Shore Platter, and the UN Special, which is everything on one tin foil plate. And finally on the bottom the meats: head cheese, and bologna; steaks and chops; lights and tripe and kidneys; ox tails, soup bones, hamburger, pork links, veal paddies, mock chicken, and city chicken, and fryers and two Sage hens, and maybe a pheasant in a cellophane bag. It's the Full Freezer, the American dream, where there is no work and 32% off on your food bills and that's the big idea, if you see what I mean.

But the third kind. Someone ought to put a stop to it. The freezer you open is locked, but empty. I mean it. Empty. They have the freezer and they could get in on a Food Plan and that is why I'm telling you this, because there are so many empty freezers. Why?

In Brentwood, and Trotwood, and Arkham Heights I find all freezers belong to a Freezer Plan but when the door quivers and those nice white lights come on like the inside of a hospital where they wheel you down the curved corridors and into the tile-lined coil-lighted operating room or to where the ice bath is you find—afterall—the freezer is empty. When I find an empty freezer I think something is wrong with the whole system: the two packing plants, the dogs that like to follow the delivery men right into the kitchen, and The Plan itself. Some day all freezers *will stop working*.

People ought to realize this.

But when a freezer is what it ought to be, I take my broccoli and soup bones and juice. The moment I walk out of a basement I have a nice little food plan, in miniature, packed in my foil-lined cases. I walk across the city to my room, and unload, and then walk back again to get the items I left hidden under the shrubbery. Two trips will clean out any freezer. Then I get some sleep.

You think I would eat that stuff?

Not on your life. And I can explain that, too.

You see, before anything melts, I take a *very few* packages to various outlets. I get my coffee and bread and hot dogs in exchange. Naturally I get a little cash, extra.

I'm saving all the cash to get a nice upright of my own because if you think I like to get names on a list, and walk at night, and keep a map, and carry two suitcases across the city, you are crazy. Like everyone else, I want to take it easy. When I save enough cash I'll set an upright in my room and every night I'll took a look... Afterall, I'm only human.

Regards the other packages of frozen things, which I mentioned.

This next may strike you a little odd, until you think about it. You may have wondered about all those shelves, from top to bottom, in the closet where I keep my tools. Those shelves are built just right to hold juice, and vegetables, and TV dinners, and all my meats. That closet is my Ever Normal Granary. A light comes on when you open the door and I put foil on the walls and rubber sheeting on the floor. Naturally, however, my stuff melts, thaws out, turns to water. It's not fair or right: some of us have got no juice. *We are cut off from the cold.* Why? Some of us don't have either The Plan or the freezer. Why?

I want you to know this: though I have to keep bringing in more things (because I have not yet saved enough) I do not waste food. As the packages on the bottom of my closet melt, I place them by my window. I sit there at night and one by one I throw every single item back into the river. *Back* to the river. Water makes vegetables, and the river is water, so I give everything back to the river. I am probably the only individual you know that feeds rivers.

Now, about that boy.

First off, I want you to know I did not *encourage* him. He really wanted to do it, and I'll tell you all about that.

I was in the Arkham Heights district. I had my suitcases and all my tools. There was a nice curved drive towards the basement door, and lots of soft bushes.

Upstairs in this house was a party. I like to watch a party as well as the next individual. I saw a woman run past the window, and a man run right after her. There were about thirty couples, dancing and touching each other in various ways.

Outside the basement door I listened. The place wanted me too.

But not locked.

A forty thousand dollar house and a big freezer in the basement and they don't lock the basement door. That one made me sore: everybody should lock their basement doors.

Sure enough, in the corner a big white upright freezer was breathing ever so lightly. I could already feel the quiver that comes when my automobile jack gets good purchase on a door. Directly above my head was the music and the dancing, not three feet away. If they had only known what was just below their feet...

Freezer not locked. That one really made me sore. Of course I take a look at freezers because that's where the stuff is. But if a freezer is not locked then I might as well *do it* in an appliance store...

Cold air gushed out. The inside service light flicked on.

There she was: corridors of tile and frost and the hospital smell of an electric motor. The sterile cold air was the ether and the cold of the Veteran's hospital ice bath where they used to soak me.

Empty. Not a package of broccoli or asparagus or juice or even a lousy homemade cake or those phoney roasting ears that a lot of individuals put up in plastic bags. For a moment I just stood there, very angry thinking I was alone, you see what I mean?

"You stealing stuff?" this kid says, from behind me.

I was a little surprised.

I turned around.

You saw him on page one, but now he was astraddle my large suitcase, like on a hobby horse. Right away I knew he had followed me through the basement door, else wouldn't I have heard him when he walked down the stairs to see the freezer before he went to bed?

"Oh yeah?" the kid says and rocked back and forth on my large suitcase and said giddy-yap as on TV but then he got off and came and stood beside me—like this—and looked inside the freezer. Black hair and black eyes, and about this tall, about up to the second shelf. Either he was smoking a cigarette or his

breath was turning white in the cold air which came out of the freezer. No kid should smoke. I mean cancer is just everywhere.

"Sure," I said very kindly because I saw he was interested in the same thing I was. "My tools are in the suitcase. Service call."

"I'll bet," the kid says, and booted my black suitcase, "at two a.m.?"

In all the years I have been walking at night and getting lists of names by following along behind the freezer delivery men, doing this very important work, no one ever saw me. Oh, barked at by dogs and I've slipped back into corners to hide when women unexpectedly came down the basement steps, but this kid is the first individual who ever came on me when a freezer door was open and lighted.

"Three nights I been trailing you," the boy said and he came back to stand beside me. He was real interested, I could see that. "You nutty or something?"

"No I'm not nutty or something," I said.

The boy placed his hand on the cold shelf of the freezer. I saw that calm look on his face. He also liked to see a freezer. Perhaps in a slightly different way from me, a grown man, but he liked it. Right then I knew I wanted to tell him all about it.

You can recognize people who are like that boy. Sometimes around the bus station or the railroad station where I check my big suitcase I like to look directly into the faces of certain individuals. I think to myself, Oh the things I could tell you. If you just *knew* if you just knew how it is to let a frozen package of broccoli curve out the window and into that warm, soft river. Sometimes I look into a woman's face—especially—and I know she too would like to take a look at a freezer, but I don't ever ask any of them. I just think to myself: Oh, the things I could tell you if you just *knew* who I am.

"Empty," the boy says. "They signed up but they couldn't pay. Owe everybody in town."

I could see the kid was sore, too. I'm only human but that's too much: get a nice freezer and subscribe to The Plan, and then have an empty. Right then I knew if he was interested enough to follow me at night that I should teach him something that would do him some good in after life.

So I explained why every freezer should have something in

it. Insofar as individuals do not follow The Plan then there is waste and inefficiency and a rise in temperatures and a general softening of the whole moral fiber of the U. S.

"And that is why," I told him just as plain as I'm telling you right now, "that no one should ever *get inside*. In fact no individual has ever got inside a freezer."

"That so?" he says, and puts his hand back on the shelf, just to test the frost.

"Often time," I said, for I wanted him to understand about my work, "I myself, have thought it would teach everyone a good lesson."

He understood that all right. I wanted to teach him *one thing* and he understood that all right. So I was ready to go now, and was just about to slam the door.

"Well," he said and he grabbed me by the arm and pulled me back, "I'm not as big as you and maybe I could..."

I did not encourage him. I said just what I'd tell any individual, namely, that no one should *ever get inside*, no matter what it would teach a lot of people.

"I'd do it," he said, "but does that little light go off?"

I was honest with him because I knew he had an interest. Frankly I do not know what happens inside so that's what I said, "I do not know," I said, "Freezers are a hobby of mine you might say, but I would not know about the little service light."

Now that's exactly what I started to tell you, I mean the whole *Truth*: I did not encourage him.

His face was calm and smiling the last time I saw it. The latch made a very soft little click as I closed the door.

But here is the funny thing.

I never did find out from him if the light went off or not.

Just then cars outside the house began to start. I had to get back across town to my room with the two black, empty, suitcases.

Well, upstairs the people finally got over their party and got around to ordering, and sometime after that a Food Plan delivery truck individual went into the basement. And opened the door. Which *was not locked*.

You have been reading in the papers how the boy shut himself in, which is correct. Also the people having the party up-

JAMES B. HALL

stairs did not come down to look inside their freezer before they went to bed, and they should always do that. Things like that make a real difference.

And that is why I have not been outside my room for three weeks. I have had to eat the frozen stuff I got from a little nine-footer out in Dolphwood. The old basis of exchange is gone because the clerks at those certain outlets now look at me in a very strange way. Why?

Now my river outside gets nothing but empty pasteboard boxes. Even now I hear the rains coming once more and the river is rising slowly. I can not sleep because whenever I doze the river comes in my window to get at my foil-lined suitcases. Why?

But one of these nights I will have to go out. I still have a few names on the old list. In fact, I may get out your way.

Now be sure and tell this to your daughters and to your wife: tell them, *keep their basements locked*.

You see what I mean?



THE QUARTER'S EPIC

OPUS* AND EURYNICE*; AN ALLEGORY

*Ita imbecillitas membrorum infantil-ium
innocens est, non animus infantum.*

St. Augustine

For M. D. Feld

PRO-ROGUE

I want no hero, not even half of one.
Heroes abound; and besides I'm my own.
Hear my heroism gurgling through my tripes:
I live for myself—and for the archetypes.
Let others, like lemmings, rush to the sea of prose,
I abide with Donne and Dante and the Rose.
In the grain of sand I am the lurking Plato;
I am the organ-voice tuned to castrato.

Of heroes there are enough; I want none.
But what I lack is some great grave action.
There are a thousand Achilles, but how many Troys!
There is one Resurrection, but a billion goys,*
One Rome to found, one Jerusalem to sack,
Yet a hundred Aeneases offer their back.
But is greatness possible now when Law is all
And History's beyond one man's control?
When 'chilles sulks on couch, and ponders heel,
And asks his analyst how he should feel?

Well, hear! Hear by what internal processes,
In what dark and dreadful recesses,
Pursued by Seven Symbolic Beasts afoam,
I, Poet, Hero, created a Poem!

INVOCATION OF THE MUSE

O Muse, bending over the latest Review,
Sing, o sing of something nice and new:
Sing of the newest, brightest, youngest Critic
Whose diary-a's* caused by meta-physic.

Sing of the latest poet, tin-ear and all,
 Who thinks his anti-poetry is beautiful
 And longs but to put the iamb to the rack
 Till at last it croak it "I am" back.
 O give me their blindness, deafness, nerve
 That I, like them, the Arts may illy serve.
 And sing! my Muse, of how I wrote my poem,
 Of how, asleep abed one night at home,
 I rose and paced from darkened room to room
 Because to turn again I did not hope
 (Desiring this man's tart and that man's pope*),
 Of how, like Milton Heaven, Byron Spain,
 I — but enough! The croaking raven bellows, Begin.

I. THE STARTING-OFF OR THE SETTING-FORTH OR THE UNDERTAKING*

That sacred night, beneath the constellation
 Of the Bore, I, Petcel *, poet and emanation
 Of the Great Mind and of the Great Chain
 Of Being, bearing on my brow the mark of Cain,
 And on my pyjama pocket my monogram
 And therein, too, full many a gear and cam,
 That night, I say, I rose from bed of dreams
 (Where nightly I commune with is and seems
 And was and will, and often see
 Imitations of immorality)
 — Yes! I took the fatal step, so filled I felt
 With stirring things within, things dark and poorly spelt,
 A striving toward Creation, Couplets, Light.
 And then I knew a poem'd be born that night,
 Which back would bear Eurynice from Hell's Gyre.*
 O gladsome-hearted, I seized m'supple Lyre,
 And also my Anthology and Bestiary and Dictionary,
 And whispered "Dante" and "Thirteenth Century"
 And many a Pater Noster and Hail Mary,
 And thought of Augustine and Thomas and Dramaturgy
 — Since I do nothing without benefit of our critical Clergy,
 For, if I remember Mr. T. E. Hulme,
 To live without God is to live without Doom,
 — Original Sin, I mean, it's essential to Art;
 Who disagrees is a decadent Humanist upstart.

I asked myself, "Petcel, how shall you go?"
 For Seven Rooms I had still to cross through;
 And answered inspiredly, "Go by analogy:
 Go by several Levels of Meaning, go by Anagogy;
 This is most Metaphysical and Academic
 And also most Modern, Catholic and Stratagemic."
 And so I cried, "If the World be like a Crosse,
 If Teares be Seas, if Lovers bee equale to Fosse,
 Then am I a paire of ragged calipers *
 Scuttling across an Epigone's diapers."
 Thus I entered the First Room, the Room of Vipers.

II. THE JOURNEY INTO THE UNDERWORLD OR KATABASIS

Hardly I the threshold crossed but found
 A beast of Seven Snakes as One Snake bound,
 So subtly intertwined their bodies were. It roared
 With Seven Tongues Se'en Sounds, all one fell chord:
 "I am Order. If a poem you'd write,
 Use me — if not, you write in Art's despite."
 "But see the Modern World, unclassed, unfeudal,
 Wild as Chaos, Night or hair of Poodle.*
 — And if the world so confusèd be,
 So also," I said, "Modern Poetry."
 But the Beast, unsoothed, it seemed, meant to pérdure,
 And so, I thought, "I'll fight Order with Ordure!"
 Therewith I sang and struck the string of Pound:
 "Ezura maketh much of stour and stound
 Ezura hath many and many a bone to pick
 Ezura raiseth boils on Humanist neck
 He slappeth Windy Lewis on front and back
 Ezura hateth iamb and loveth pastiche
 Ezura letteth 'em have it, the nouveau riche
 Ezura maketh new any old thing
 Ezura maketh gobbledygook to sing
 Confoundeth the wise, the good doth shend
 O Ezura defieth beginning middle and end."
 So I sang, and The Beast trembling did depart.
 O Reader, believe — such is the power of Art.

That Room traversed, the Second then I entered.
 O how shall words describe the monster there encountered!
 Foul Grace it was! a Leopard lithe
 Whose every move was true. Nor did he writhe.
 His pink lips curled, he spoke, and fangs he bared:
 "O you, who on this journey grave have dared,
 Know that your poem should move even as I."
 "O Grace," I answered, "you I give the lie.
 So long as muscles bulge like pips in skin,
 And I have constipation deep within,
 So long I grunt, heave, hatch, preach and curse
 For the glory of God, angels, man and verse."
 And then at once I smote the Hopkins string,
 And of "The Wreck of Dumpty-Humpty" did sing:
 "God gobbled gladness, give o'er, give,
 Give! O Fall flop spill, yet live!
 In the yolk-joke diet-riot of worldwide
 Razzle-dazzle helter-skelter Yes! in tide
 Of albino albumen Aube. There! the flash flood flume
 Of it. O crisp Christ-bridal be Mary-groom! •"
 So the Leopard crept off in a confusion of spots,
 Nor dared he look other than like that wife of Lot's.
 And so I entered the Third Room, of Clarity.

O august Muse, do minister in thy Charity
 To my great need, that I may descant here
 Upon that Beast, the most terrible and drear
 Of all yet met, who merely said, "Be clear,"
 And then, apologetically, "Make sense."
 "Monster, be off," I cried. "Oh! Get thee hence.
 With sensibility I war on Sense.
 The world is sexy and messy and you're too chaste;
 They love me for this at every U in the States.
 For the greyer the pedant the purpler the taste."
 There 'pon I stroked the string of Thomas Dylan
 (The ads all say its rhymes with penicillin),
 And of young youth and whatnot 'gan to crow:
 "Now as I was a branny muffin in the tilting window
 Of Child's, O it was ducky and dunking,
 And I was golden and greeny-moldy, funking,
 O it was sitting and sunning and watching the girls
 With their hairy fishes* and their loxey curls,

But Waiter Time held me fast in his tussle tongs
And put me on the plate, despite all my songs,
A shabby genteel old lady to please
— Though I stank in my grains like old cheddar cheese."
Thus was brute limpid Clarity overcome,
So I pressed on to the Fourth, the Sensuous Room.

Was there e'er so foul a beast? To me he said,
"Write not mere words, words unmusical and dead,
But write with those that in their song and harmonies
Cause all the senses to rise and feast their eyes —"
"Oh, beast," I snapped, "I'll write like Wystan Auden"
And at the mere name the beast turned dry and wooden!

When I entered Five, the Room of Grandeur,
I little thought I should that Beast endure.
So big he was, yet well-proportioned, agile.
His voice rang upon my ear: "Fear not the eagle,
Fear not height or the grand vista or to fly;
Fear not your own great unblinking eye."
I digned not answer, caring nought to wing the heavens,
But right off smote amain the string of Stevens,
And hitched my Muse to the very cutest star.
Yes, I changed my Lyre to a toy guitar
And then upon the tinniest coyest string
Went *plunk-a-plunk-a-plunk-a-plunk-a-pling*.
Oh it was pitched beyond all sound and sense,
Cute as tom and metaphysical as the dickens.

Wearied though I was, I onward went,
For Hero-Poets are by Heaven sent —
Some to catch mandrake, some the falling dew,
And some to walk the campus of a midwestern U.
So straightaway I crossed the Room (named Six)
Of Common Sense, where Three Pragmatical Pigs
Of the world accosted me. "Build," they said,
"With straw or wood or stone, but not with your head.
Love the thisness of the world, that never abates."
"Aroint," I cried, and plucked the string of Yeats,
And muttered curse and sang of Mask and Gyre
(Which some explain appears a retreaded tire)
— And Lo! the monsters vanished on the instant,
For what is so dread as Poet on Symbols intent
Who pitches verse in tattered Cabal tent!

And came then to the Seventh, Passion's Room.
 O reader mine, knowest what drives the noumen-
 ena out of Mind, knowest what urges *ding*
 aus *sich*, and Plato's Word from Aristotle's Thing?
 O knowest what drives every dunce to press,
 And after breakfast obliges even the noblesse?
 Impelled as though to quell a world a-doom
 I played my mettlesome Lyre with a scholarly boom
 Against that raging, drunk Beast of Passion
 Who had cried, "Give me but the Heart's occasion."
 But then like liturgical Eliot
 I sang, "Bled white by a course in Comp Lit
 And by my snobbery, comparing *that* man's art
 With *this* man's life (always the worser part),
 By the sweet Thames I sat me down to Dant
 Of what every Angli-can American't;
 Because time past is (mumble mumble mumble)
 And time present (mumble mumble mumble)
 (Understatement, irony) and poems of mine
 Are measured out in someone else's line,
 I come to moralize upon a skull,
 'Alas, poor Western Culture, I knew it well.'
 And so I drone till every Prigneck Sweeney
 With his *Kenyon Review* and college beanie
 Can moralize like me his Maiden Auntie,
 By quoting now some Donne and now some Dante
 And think humanity suffix to his 'anti.'"
 And on and on with dying fall I went
 Till Passion wandered off, all passion spent.

III. THE CREATIVE ACT OR PURGATION OR KATHARSIS

O Muse, who bows to Science before she stoops to art,
 Let my prayer find your bloodless positivist heart:
 O ancient Muse who sings in breathless pants
 To the tune of Fellowships and Foundation Grants,
 O Muse who broods above those lib'ry stalls
 Where overgraduates scrape their critic scrawls,
 O Muse who brings Pound-lovers away from sense
 And Rahv and Schwartz to Writers' Conference,
 O Muse, if such you be and do exist,
 Now aid me at the end of this my quest,
 That I may soar to something higher, keener,
 Beyond the bounding reach of man, or Kenner!

At last, into the bath I stumbling stole,
 And on my image in the ineffable secret bowl
 (Which answered back in kind my "I love me")
 I poured my plenteous stream of poesy,*
 Grand as the Nile and golden as the Liffey.*
 Beneath its force my handsome image broke
 And sank into the Sea of Faith to soak.
 And on that stream there nymph-like slithered to me
 My long-lost, my beloved, Eurynice.
 "My love!" I cried, "Come to the world of light.
 Be printed, and a success overnight.
 The Critics shall your hairs split; Joost
 Shall teach you, Brooks dissect, and Jarrell boost."
 And warm Eurynice whispered through our kiss,
 "That you can do so much with merest this!"

IRVING FELDMAN
 RIO PIEDRAS, P.R.
 March 1955
 (revised, 1960)

NOTES

TO BOUVARD AND PECUCHET

*without whose example of patient stupidity
 these Notes should never have been written.*

I set down these Notes in the hope that the generations of critics (and lay readers) following me shall be afforded by their agency a clearer insight than is now granted us into that utterly magnificent and mysterious thing—the mind and sensibility of The Poet. The fact is that were it not for a tradition already long established I should set these Notes at the head of this work and the poem at its foot. For it is my own humble opinion that the footnotes being written at present are far superior to the poetry which is, as it were, appended to them. The work of Ezra Pound provides a fine example. I content myself therefore with the tradition of Spenser, Pope, and Eliot and set them here, though with this reminder to the Reader (who probably needs no such prompting)—that only by virtue of its feet does a poem move.

These Notes are by no means exhaustive, only the more obvious explications being included here. Thousands remain to the Reader to work out at his leisure.

Opus. The poet derives this word from Orpheus minus Rhe(a). That the Goddess of Earth nowhere appears in this poem indicates the platonic character of the work of art, this *subtraction* being equivalent to an *abstraction*. As the astute reader has already guessed, the poet denies the dualism implicit here.

Eurynice. A complex pun signifying Eurydice, the Erinyes, your're-nice, and urine-easy. It shall be easily understood how this word in its rich allegorical stance fills the central position of the poem, its evacuation of which is not to be underestimated. Symbolically, it is the *persona* of all *personae*, the archetypal archetype, the philosopher's Stone which pans all the streams of God into gold.

PRO-ROGUE

goys. This word has a significant and highly symbolic history: from the Sanskrit *goi* (the hinder part of the forelock of a heifer about to be sacrificed) to the Babylonian *goii* (a nomad) and thence to the Hebrew *goi* (a heavy soldier) and the Greek *agoi* (a mote in someone else's eye) and finally to the Yiddish *goy* (uncircumcized). Thus we see that Othello's, "I took by the throat the circumcized dog" is not a mere expression of Moorish odium and detestation, but the very outcry of a civilization, a cosmology, in the throes of destruction (or birth). It is, of course, in this last sense that this word is used here.

INVOCATION OF THE MUSE

diary-a. A very clever pun.

Desiring this man's tart and that man's pope. Note the strategy of the irony of paraphrase. I say no more.

I. THE STARTING-OFF OR ETC.

The Starting-Off or etc. An archetype.

Petcel. A composite name and one of the many personae in which the poet appears in this work. It is derived as follows: P—Pound, el—Eliot, etc (occupying the central position) —The Tradition.

Hell's Gyre. Recent excavations west of Times Square have confirmed the existence of this hitherto merely intuited phenomenon.

a paire of ragged calipers. =crabs=shell fishes=salvages="The Dry Salvages" by T. S. Eliot. The reader will notice here also the striking cancer image which hits off modern society so well.

II. THE JOURNEY INTO THE UNDERWORLD, ETC.

Poodle. A mythical Assyrian beast, half-Panther, half-Strudel, half-Elk, half-Lion, said to rise from the earth in Spring bearing the dismembered Kiwanis in his pouch. Cf. John Smith and Michael Robartes, *The Babylonian Rotarian Year*.

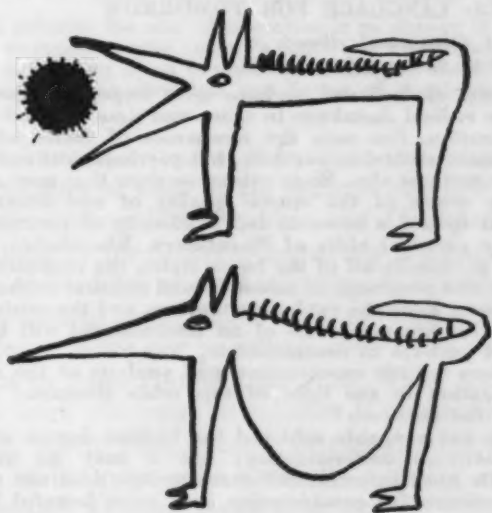
O crisp Christ-bridal be Mary-groom. A subtle allusion to all the King's horses. The union of yolk and albumen has taken place and Humpty Dumpty has been scrambled. That he is now a crepe suzette (crisp) indicates his lifting-up into the bosom (or belly) of God—though it is not indicated in which of the turns of tripe ("rose petals" in Dante's euphemistic phrase) he is finally to be lodged. As is said of the ineluctable interpenetration of good and evil, "You can't scramble eggs without breaking the shells."

hairy fishes. A Freudian image. The reader may here be reminded of that remarkable phrase of Ezratum of Naxos (or Ob Noxious, in the ancient Minoan): TI SODAUATER, TI AIS, TI AIBOLL

III. THE CREATIVE ACT OR ETC.

My plenteous stream of poesy. The critical reader will have observed the suppression of all water-imagery until this, the very end of the poem. It is only here that this copious stream, with its full regenerative force, rushes in upon the poetic "Waste Land," revivifying and fructifying it.

golden as the Liffey. Very ironical. Cf. James Joyce, *passim*.



DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN

Dear Reed,

Isolated away as you are up there in the North, you may not be quite as aware as we down here in the Center of how much support we are finding in our efforts to improve the communications channels of American. But I think that if you will familiarize yourself with the end results of this quarter's compilatory activities, you will see why I feel that I can say that the flood of creative American is at full tide. Just about everybody who is anybody is either communicating in this new way, clipping out the triumphs of others who are, or organizing conferences where people can learn to communicate in this new way. We cover just about all the quarters of the spectrum this time, and rather than say much about it, I'm just going to indicate the general sector of American Life from which the product comes and let example speak for itself. These are the guardians of our national prose. Let him scoff who will, if he will.

I. OUR COLLEGES

A. ROLLINS COLLEGE CONFERENCE ON THE ARTS AND SCIENCES: LANGUAGE FOR TOMORROW

To Those Concerned About The Arts of Communication

The most obvious and perhaps most imperative fact of our day is the radical shrinkage in space and time effected by rapid communication. Not only the mechanics of facile adjustment have assumed critical importance, but psychological and cultural bases of readiness also. Many evidences show that men are internationally aware of the crucial quality of our situation: the movement toward a more or less continuity of summit conferences, the personal visits of Eisenhower, Khrushchev, and the heads of practically all of the lesser states, the organization and success of the programs of scientific and cultural exchange—all are instances. Even the exploding tourism, and the raising of the iron curtains are symptoms of an international will to understand and perhaps to accommodate.

But there is little examination and analysis of the media of communication in the light of this crisis situation: are they adequate for its needs?

Science has probably achieved the highest degree of success in international understanding; but it may be questioned whether its most instrumental characteristic does not really invalidate science for consideration as a most hopeful basis for

international understanding, peace and good will, that is, its objectivity. Is it not likely that mutual understanding must concomitantly come in the subtler, more subjective fields of art, music, and philosophy, and may not the method of inquiry be the golden key? . . .

Sincerely,
Schiller Scroggs, Dean of the College

B. _____ COLLEGE CREATIVE ARTS WEEK
(From an invitation to speak thereat)

I know . . . that it is difficult making arrangements for leaving your work there, so we have an honorarium designated to alleviate the disruption and as a gratification for your services.

II. OUR UNIVERSITIES

A. Duke University stands at the threshold—perhaps just across the threshold—of a period of supreme usefulness. Its students, its faculty, its alumni, and its friends—all of whom have had a part in its almost unprecedented development—regard with no small pride and satisfaction its great achievements to date.

It is imperative that the past, however, serve as a foundation for the future. The stature now acquired must be protected and increased, if Duke is to give to the immediate and the distant futures the great gifts of education, research, and intellectual progress that are within its potential. . . .

Reevaluations will be conscientiously made. There will be searching discussion, and there will be an implementation of the democratic processes that make our nation and our institutions the greatest that exist. Ultimately we can expect sound conclusions and vigorous activity. Meanwhile, however, the growing excellence of each school and college, and of each department, will be unaffected—even stimulated. There will be no permanent or even temporary departure from valued traditions of the past.

From "The Presidency of Duke University,"
Duke University National Council

B. In all cultures the aim of education is to change the lives of students to conform with society's objectives and standards. The heart of counseling as an educational technique, therefore, is its influence upon the direction and forms of development of a counselee. . . .

(If the contributor of this last item were any other than Allen Tate, I would suggest only \$2.50, because he left it to me to go through a demanding little *Bulletin and Occupational Newsletter*, published by the Student Counseling Bureau of the Office of the Dean of Students of the University of Minnesota, looking for what he had in mind. Since it is, or *was*, Tate, send him \$5.00, but let us make our principles clear to our contributors: if you are as or more famous than Allen Tate, we'll do almost anything to work you into this column. If you are not as, or less famous than, Allen Tate, submit all manuscripts neatly typed on one side of the page only, *carefully pointing out what you think is especially creative about your entry*).

III. OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

Department of English

High School
_____, Michigan

Dear Sir:

Copies of this letter are being sent to several hundred college professors of English as a research study by high school English classes, in an attempt to determine how such a number of competent users of English feel as to what is and what is not considered to be "standard English." You could be of measurable assistance to us if you would check your preferences as to the use of the following items in standard, conversational English. . .

IV. OUR DICTIONARY MAKERS

To the teacher of English:

Through the requirement of *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, this fall you can establish a responsibility for clear communication and better understanding resting where it belongs—on the student. Your preferential recommendation of New Collegiate ownership now will encourage use of the dictionary in its proper perspective—as a necessary instrument for personal improvement in the use of language. With the New Collegiate as a friendly guide, your students stand to gain the most from your courses.

The novelist, poet, and journalist as well as successful people in all fields owe much. . . .

Sincerely yours,
G. C. Merriam Company

V. OUR EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The accrediting examination serves two very practical ends in helping the Commission attain its basic goal of contributing to the improvement of higher education in the nineteen-state area served by the _____ Association. First, and most importantly this official visitation by _____ representatives points up in a forceful way to the people who have a stake in institutions undergoing examination where their educational operations are good, where they are bad, and where unexplored potentials for educational development exist as their peers from the universe of _____ colleges and universities perceive them. We believe that such an appraisal is of strategic importance in stimulating self-generated improvement leading to operational perfection within these institutions. On the one hand, the examination sharpens people's awareness of problems confronting them as perfection-seeking professionals working within educational organizations. On the other hand, the particular kinds of problems our Commission helps these institutions discover, and the subsequent ways in which the Commission works to facilitate each institution's solution to them, lead ultimately to a unity of purpose and a social usefulness of function on each campus which approaches the ideal of general operational effectiveness. We believe that this is so because the Commission's evaluation rationale focuses upon the effective operation of a collegiate enterprise as a whole. We are viewing the college or university as a Gestalt which encompasses all of its general operating parts.

Secondly, the accrediting examination is important because the results of it are presently used by other people on the Commission as a judgmental base from which . . .

VI. OUR SOCIAL CRITICS

Each office within the skyscraper is a segment of the enormous file, a part of the symbol factory that produces the billion slips of paper that gear modern society into its daily shape (C. Wright Mills, *White Collar*).

. . . If psychological feelings and political outlooks do not correspond to economic class, we must try to find out why, rather than throw out the economic baby with the psychological bath, and so fail to understand how either fits into the national tub. (*Ibid*).

VII. OUR REVIEWERS

Nobody else writes with the same spontaneous incisiveness. The unpretentious articulation of America's voice by David Cort discloses a lucidity and syncopated momentum which may well be identified, retrospectively, as the truest poetical expression of the American being (R. Buckminster Fuller).

VIII. OUR POETS

I enclose "_____", which is an experience of the integrating will. "_____" is a stripping off the dross elements of personality to the centermost essentials, living, seeing, experiencing on a primal level of awareness, direct.

"_____" is what it is.

"_____" deals with the creative awareness in its attempt to be an instrument to the cosmic experience and reflects the spiritual capacity of communion (letter accompanying poems submitted to *Miscellany*).

Well, I have no doubt that all this will have cheered you up considerably, and carried you to the threshold, and perhaps beyond. About the only doubt I do have is how to fit in the last three items: (1) I'm sure that James B. Bonder, D. Ed., is contributing to our cause, but I'm not sure how. He has authored a book on *How to be a Successful Coach*, and the publisher's ad lists situations that Bonder helps you to solve. For example, "Your star fullback is on the verge of flunking out in English. The English teacher refuses to make any special allowances in this case. How do you handle it so the teacher is satisfied and the fullback plays?" (2) A high school teacher recently wrote, in recommending a student to a college, "I have not the slightest hesitation whatever in recommending this applicant as average." (3) The *Mary Collins Cheerleader Handbook* (Completely Revised Edition), says on p. 9: "There are those who feel that this qualification [Good Physical Health] should be first, and they may be right, but first or last, it is of prime importance." Do you think we should try to develop a department of Cheer Leader Handbookese?

I've worked pretty hard this time to wrap up all this diversity in one package, as it were, but I think you'll agree that I have achieved a maximum utilization of my resources.

Yours, tried and true-wise,

WAYNE BOOTH

P.S. I must miscellaneously add one TITLE FOR SOMEBODY ELSE'S BIBLIOGRAPHY: "The Problem of Escaping Clients in Non-Directive Counseling," by J. J. Gallagher.

From two to five dollars will be paid by *The Carleton Miscellany* for items used in the "Department of American." Contributors should note that we want something more than simple errors. We want bad writing or speaking that springs from bad thinking. Mere wrongheadedness is not enough. Grammatical errors are not enough. We want writing or speaking that will embarrass the hell out of the perpetrators as soon as they see it in our column. We are working, in short, to make all men, even Whittemore and Booth, think twice before they stumble into print.



OUR FOREIGN AGENTS

ROCK-DRILL DINNER-DATE

Rome, Italy
16 March 1960

A lean old lion, grizzle-thatched and whiskered, his thin gray mane a jungle patchwork, stumped lordly down from his solitary fastness or his ancient watering-place and marched snarling into town this winter—to find himself at once adopted, in lieu of the lamented wolf, by half the flock in the fold.

*I am a grave poetic hen
that lays poetic eggs
& to enhance my temperament
a little quiet begs.*

So begins a Statement of Being that Pound first issued upon his return to Italy two years ago more than half a century after its conception in Venice. Some *persona* speaks, not Pound. If ever he really sought it, he has had enough of quiet. When first they arrived after twelve years of enforced absence, Ezra and Mrs. Dorothy Shakespear Pound joined their daughter Mary de Rachewiltz at her twelfth-century castle, Brunnenberg, Merano, in the Italian Alps. *Couldn't stand the altitude*, he confided to me later; though I suspect the seclusion and calm bothered him most, reminding him of confinement. Early last year, therefore, he descended once more on Rappalo—only to discover that even there the scale was too small, his associations were too limited and his activities too restricted. So at length, as all must do, he came to Rome.

He did not slink, as I say, but strode upright and took the city by storm. He went straight to its heart, moreover, for his pretext was to present a poetry award at some festive informal affair in Trastevere itself. That done, he could relax and linger awhile, long enough to enjoy (if possible) more formal occasions and recognitions. There was a talk about his verse by an Italian who has published a new book on Pound, there was a lecture at Santa Cecilia Academy by another on his music, and there was a private *soirée* or *serata* in his honor that grew more public as the evening shuffled loudly to its close—a nightmare career through a hall of horrors (familiar to Benito's Buddies) with mis-matched paintings and ill-painted mates

crowding the high walls, ornamental bosses covering the ceiling and others not so decorative littering the floor, a repetitious sycophant proclaiming the poet (almost as loftily as his hostess), a dilettante poetaster declaiming his work (in translation of course), and a lusty but untrusty baritone (some house nephew no doubt) serenading our most unwilling Atheling. Then, understandably impatient to be up and doing, Ezra set off for Recanati—to speak the modest merits of that hamlet's favorite son, not the late tenor Gigli but the early poet Leopardi. I propose to employ our breathing space upon this letter.

This is, as it happens, the first anniversary of my earliest encounter with Ezra. A year ago, on the eve of leaving for Milan, I saw a newspaper photo of Pound at Rapallo and immediately sent a note requesting an audience for myself as a teacher of his poetry and for a former student as a promising poet. *If your promising poet is not interested in history and fighting blackout of same*, he replied in an epistle resembling a rather careless canto, *please appear without him*. Confident that all good pupils deplore historical blackouts, I appeared with my protégé at the Albergo Grande Italia & Lido in Rapallo late Monday afternoon, March 16, 1959. Pound duly met us outside the hotel restaurant together with his wife and secretary. Then, pivoting on his all-purpose ash-plant, he spun a full ninety degrees and led the parade into the salon—where his authority proved absolute, his simplest word propounding mysteries rent subsequently by his every gesture.

I was told, and it does seem true, that lately Pound has lost some of his Snap-Crackle-Pop. *Senility is setting in*, sighed one observer, *after all he'll be seventy-five next October*. Remarked another, *He doesn't sparkle anymore and he knows it*. There were rumors of an imminent recantation and hints to that effect from Pound himself. He is even said to have said, *I was misled*. When we met again last week, his first words were, *Your letter's lying right on top . . .* And at that point, *gone in the teeth/For a botched civilization*, our lion bared his fangs and disclosed ruins now in process of repair. A dentist can remove the spunk from anyone along with the ivory. So can a condition requiring such attentions. It remains to be seen whether Ezra's change of heart and pace is temporary and superficial or profound and permanent. Last year he mounted a spectacular old-time performance at Rapallo.

My recall is unfortunately far from total—and was already five minutes after our dismissal. Ezra would have snagged a tape-recorder (happy inspiration) disposed discreetly below the intimate table or behind a convenient arras. Whereas an American by turns talks and eats throughout a meal, an Italian eats when a course arrives and

speaks when it disappears. Pound has the best of both worlds, by devouring constantly and conversing simultaneously. Furthermore, he is all poet and ever the imagist. He thinks and speaks as he writes, only more so. His table-talk is a dramatic monolog, the better half of a dialog in which the subservient role is no less suppressed than in a lyric or canto. Though he rarely interrupts his discourse even to breathe or swallow, it has no apparent continuity and no ultimate conclusion. Everything goes, yet everything not somehow indispensable goes out. A rhythm, an allusion, a figure of speech may suggest the next phase or phrase. The colon from *In a Station of the Metro* is always implicit. You follow if you can and, if not, *tant pis* or *peccato!* White wine all the while describes a brief familiar crescent and less often a broad arc as Ezra, never pausing to take aim, grudgingly but unerringly replenishes a lady's glass down the table. And toward meal's end, cracked for punctuation, nuts leap obediently toward his mouth as shells scatter abroad like husks of images.

Yes, yes, but what *did* Ezra say? Well, as he must do every night of his life, Pound brilliantly condensed his last hundred cantos and projected the next half-dozen. In order completely to follow, one would need not only to share his special knowledge but also to understand his pet identifications. There is the Bitch, there is Slime as well as the Slimes, and there is that Blight which in full is Fuliblight. Bill may be Shakespeare or Yeats or Williams. Antheil is George, still alive to the quick eye of Ezra's mind—as are Fordie and Wyndham and Gaudier, or Picabia pulling Cocteau's leg and then letting it snap back. Possum, on the contrary, is as good as buried. (While her husband was savoring again the report that Eliot had already selected his plot, Mrs. Pound displayed for an instant a concealed rancor more scorching than all his open-furnace blasts, describing how she had insured herself against American interment.) Nobody follows completely.

What did he say? He said that anger is good, that patience is necessary, that optimism is paramount, that substance is all. Of his life here: *I got out of Paris in 1924 because things were more interesting in Italy.* Of his recent ordeal: *I last heard from [Sister] Bernetta [Quinn] when they sprung me from the bughouse.* Of his work in progress: *How many is it up to now?* And of certain old foes: *I say with Violet [Hunt] there are two kinds of people I dislike on sight, the crocodile type and the foetus face, which looks as though it had never been properly born.* [Steve and I glance apprehensively across at each other.] *The first you always find crawling out from under the frocks of the Jesuits, like De Valera and De Gaspari. As for the other, isn't there something of Atreus in the fall of the house of Churchill?* And so much more...

So what do I conclude? *Amid the darkness of the mind*, Dame Edith Sitwell sees and says, *the splendor . . .* Or, as John Ciardi sang in the Pound number of *The Yale Literary Magazine*,

*The man dies with his thoughts on, loused in his own
Stink, and bagged for Heaven burning.*

Or, in the first issue of *The Carleton Miscellany*, the whole of Howard Nemerov's *Maestria*. On the evening I speak of, perhaps that very day, Pound had accomplished his *Thrones*—wherein he sights or cites *the sky's glass leaded with elm boughs* and adds (on the last page of all) *form is cut in the lute's neck, tone is from the bowl . . .* This is what I think. *Canto 83* had closed, *Down, Derry-down/Oh let an old man rest*. The long work now ends, if only for the time being, with the final line of *Canto 109: You in the dinghey (piccioletta) astern there!*

JOHN LUCAS

LETTERS FROM A GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dear Reed:

Some time ago you asked me to write an account of life at Graduate School. I wanted to do this, but felt I was the wrong man for the job. I'm something of a malcontent here, and any picture I gave of the place would be plaintive and sour, apt to annoy your readers. The report, I decided, should be written by a thorough-going advocate of the whole System. After an arduous search among my classmates I found just the right man, Jimmy Leibniz, who is a few years ahead of me and a true enthusiast. To get the report from him I sent him several letters, posing as a Foundation man. It took some prodding, but here, in full, is the letter he finally sent. No one, it seems to me, could have given a more sympathetic account.

Sincerely,
DAVID YOUNG

Dear Mr. Briscle:

You have written several times to inquire about the particular nature of my life as a graduate student, and I have been slow, I admit, in answering. This is because I have never felt myself quite adequate to the task of describing to an outsider our unusual mode of life. But your hint that my reply might be published set me to rethinking the matter. It would do a lot of good, I know, if people could be told

what it is *really* like here. Many of them, I think, consider it a place of unpleasant tedium, a scholarship factory where people waste their time on senseless projects, a training ground for hack critics and academic bores. And what could be further from the truth?

My own field, as you know, is Literature. While I shall of course be giving details peculiar to my own department, I am not disposed to warn you against generalization, for I feel that study in my own field is quite typical of study in most other fields. The paths to specialization are strikingly parallel. Just the other day a fellow next to me leaned over during the lecture and whispered: "Does he call this *Philosophy*?" I explained to him that he was sitting in a course in Anglo-Saxon Religious Prose. Thus he was pleased, as was I, at the astonishing harmony, as it were, between the various disciplines.

I should stress right here at the outset the felicity of our existence. One is tempted to say with Marvell, "What wondrous life is this I lead!" etc. Graduate study at this great Eastern university is almost akin to those ideal pastoral states described by the early romancers; the harsh realities, the doubts and anxieties of the outside world, these rarely intrude upon us. It is true that we have our own disagreements, but they are seldom anything more than trifling matters of professional jealousy.

I think the key to this bliss lies in the concept of order. The world we know and partake of, some six centuries of Anglo-Saxon literature, has been arranged in a marvelously ordered whole, with everything sectioned off, labelled, and firmly in its place. The same method has been applied to us, the present inhabitants of this world, who are ordered in what might be called a Great Chain of Being, descending from the most distinguished and influential professor to the research assistants in the library. For many of us, the figure at the very top of this hierarchy, the Unmoved Mover, so to speak, is an elderly critic, once a poet, who lives in England. The entire arrangement is solid and comforting, not just to those at the top but to those like myself as well, who are safe, warm, and happy in the lower niches.

But it is the daily routine, that part of life which would be considered humdrum anywhere else, that I wish to describe to you. To this end I have made the experiment of keeping a diary of my daily activities for one week. The week in question, last week, is quite typical of the kind of happy and useful activity in which I have been engaged since I graduated from college.

MONDAY—Spent most of the day in the library. Hadn't meant to, but having got way into the bowels of same, lost my way and couldn't get out. Watchman found me at closing time, led me out. He said students are sometimes not found until it is too late, in

which cases it is pretty generally the smell which makes discovery possible. "You will nose him as you go through the stacks." Well, there are worse ways to go. Idea I had: next time take some string and pay it out so I can follow it back. Don't know if I can afford to buy string unless I go without cigarettes a bit.

TUESDAY—Today in class (Pamphlet Prose in the Victorian Era) Prof. Mulch passed around a first edition of which he was very proud. While we were fondling it he said: "Take a sniff of it; there's nothing like the rich aroma of an old book." Several of us, taking up this hint, went round after class to the secondhand bookstore. Spent the rest of the afternoon smelling the best volumes we could find. A good deal of sneezing and choking, but we all agreed we had found a fine new pastime. Bookstore clerk laughed at us; obviously uneducated.

WEDNESDAY—Worked all day and most of the night on a paper. Mostly a matter of checking variant spellings in a medieval text against citations in the O.E.D., then turning the results into percentages. Valuable work, as it is going into the back of the professor's next book. He also wants us to hand in a colored map of England, showing the different dialect regions, but as I did this in high school it won't be any trouble for me.

THURSDAY — Worked on the paper some more. Fell asleep several times. I have been writing a lot of papers recently. Leaves me little or no time for reading, even when the material is the subject of the paper. But I have all my life to read, and the paper-writing has taught me a great deal about scholarship. I have learned to make them longer, and I have learned to deal with subjects I once would not have thought worth bothering about. I had a glimpse of my progress the other day: Prof. Pismire, blinking and snuffling a good deal (asthma), told me that one of my papers showed promise. "If you can expand the length some and narrow the subject a little, it might do very well for —" here he mentioned a certain learned publication which is the subject of considerable reverence around here. I was mighty pleased with this compliment and pulled my forelock and scraped my heel until he dismissed me. What a kindly old fellow he is! Like Dr. Johnson.

FRIDAY—A real windfall today. Found a cigarette butt which had hardly been smoked at all. Had it after lunch. Witnessed an altercation in class this afternoon. During a discussion about Shelley, Prof. Hamilcar, who usually sits by with a glazed look while we read our papers, apparently got it into his head that his critical reputation was being attacked. Poor man lost all control. Grew red in

the face, began bellowing and pounding the table. When class was over he was so weak from his fit that I had to carry his briefcase for him. I expect he will get two or three people thrown out for this incident.

SATURDAY—Today I made, I think, some real progress, this time in the area of speaking. I have been slow to acquire facility with the working critical vocabulary that every good student needs (what a jealous outsider might call “jargon”). It is not an easy thing to master. It changes constantly, and it is more disgraceful, I think, to use an obsolete term than none at all. Yet one simply cannot write or converse with the professors without the right terms at one’s fingertips. As Pismire once told us: “These are your tools.” I have got to the point where I can pretty generally make myself understood without provoking scorn, but today I scored a real triumph. I raised my hand in class and out came the following sentence: “The cohesive juxtaposition of metrical pigments and a sonant syllabic interpenetration give this poem a distinct susurrus of mimetic irony.” I don’t remember now what poem I was talking about (maybe *Paradise Regained*) but I know that the sentence itself was a real success: the professor nodded approval, several of my friends applauded lightly, and the rest of the class looked envious.

SUNDAY—Went to a party this afternoon of people in my department. As usual we stood around talking shop and passing witty remarks. Joan Shalott is better at Middle English puns than anyone else. I got to repeat my sentence a couple of times. Someone gave me a cigarette. The coffee was weak. Afterwards I went over to Oliver Casaubon’s place. He let me read his thesis, which is almost finished. It is on stanza forms in John Taylor the Water Poet, so naturally everyone is pretty excited about it. I fell asleep reading it, but fortunately Oliver wasn’t angry. I told him I thought the thesis had a nice susurrus of high mimetic irony and he agreed with me. Home and to bed.

Believe it or not, that happy, productive week was just like all the others. Useful and creative activity is the most exciting thing in the world. Incidentally, the diary is such fun that I have decided to go on keeping it. If you want to read more, send me a stamped envelope or perhaps some cigarettes, and I’ll send it along. Back to work now.

Yours Truly,

JAMES ROSE LEIBNIZ

A LETTER FROM FRANKFORT;

or, The South of the Mind

The Pink Pig was the restaurant which the motel man had recommended, saying, "We go there ourselves every once in a while. If you like barbecue, it's the place to go."

Now in the little of the south we have seen, signs selling barbecue are more common than signs selling hamburger. "Barbecue" usually means a hamburger bun filled with a smoky concoction of gravied stringy beef and I suppose it can mean a whole hog over an open fire, but at The Pink Pig it meant ham or lamb or chicken or ribs with baked beans and french-fried potatoes and slaw. I ate the ribs, John ate the ham. But more than by the food, we were impressed by the decoration of the restaurant, a large mural depicting the country around Frankfort and, we supposed, interpreting the people involved in the life of The Pink Pig.

The landscape in the mural was almost all blue-grass green and in it were only two trees, one placed stiffly at each end to frame the large central view of a plain stretching back to a range of hills. Above the hills hung a heavy cumulus cloud, blank white, billowing stiffly into a pale blue sky. Rising from these clouds was the state capitol building, made by a trick of perspective which depended perhaps only on its large size to stand out from the clouds and project itself over the central plain, an air-borne cloud-borne capitol. At the base of the hills, beneath the clouds and the capitol, were two small farms. The placement of these farms in pastures surrounded by white board fences along a winding stream forced us to understand that the farther farm buildings were three times or more the size of those nearer to us. Clearly, big people lived in one farmhouse and little people in the other. But there were no people visible around the farms. Empty windows and closed doors stared at us blankly, door mouth and blank window eyes, across the blue-green pastures.

Nor really were there people present in any other part of the mural. All the people in the picture were pigs or, if you prefer, all the pigs in the picture were people. They were arranged in three main groups. At the left, beneath the large framing tree, stood a Kentucky Colonel pig, in a wide-brimmed hat and a black frock coat, who with a stiff left arm was directing the attention of a Daniel Boone pig, in coonskin cap and with a rifle crooked in his arm, toward the center of the picture. Both the Colonel and Daniel Boone were smiling with secretive anticipation. For at the center of the picture stood a picnic table. About the table were grouped the picnicking pigs. One with a white napkin tied about his neck sat

fat and eager at the farther end of the table. In his hands or hoofs resting before him on the table, one on each side of an empty white plate, he held a knife and fork, very large and bright, in a V which framed his large stomach. The table sloped up toward this fat pig in such a way as to make him dominate the picnic scene; he looked almost as air-borne as the capitol. To his left, a little girl pig in a pinafore stood beside the table on a pile of books. She was too small to reach the top of the table and there was no chair for her, but the height of six books enabled her to reach eagerly across the table and, we assumed, squeal at the chef pig who stood in a tall white hat across from her, holding in his hands an empty platter.

On the table, ignored by the little girl pig and the fat napkined pig, was a platter of ham and sausage. This we thought rather strange. But we reasoned that the pigs at the table were simply asking for and expecting more. The table was set, yes, but all was not yet prepared. For at the right of the picture stood another chef pig. He was walking away from an empty outdoor grill which stood solid and square, built of dark red brick and certainly able to withstand much heat, but nevertheless cold and empty, neither smoking nor blazing. Perhaps the link sausages on the platter which the second chef pig was carrying were raw, we were not able to tell, but we were sure that, raw or not, their arrival at the picnic table would be welcome and that when they arrived the looks of anticipation on the countenances of the napkined pig and the little girl pig and the Colonel pig and the Daniel Boone pig would turn to looks of quiet satisfaction.

In all this charming scene was only one note of possible trouble. I said earlier that in the picture were only pigs who were people or people who were pigs, but I was wrong. You should know there was also a wolf. The wolf, however, was simply a wolf. He was naked, and the only human characteristic he had was a slavering wolf's smile. And he was apparently a very stupid wolf, for he stood behind the tree at the right, sticking out his neck, staring with such concentration at the cold empty grill that we were convinced he was somehow demented and could not see or smell the sausages, the ham, or the picnicking pigs. And it was clear that none of the pigs, not even the well-armed Daniel Boone, was worried about or even thinking about *him*. They all knew who was going to eat whom.

By the time we had drunk our coffee, The Pink Pig was filling with friendly local folk who knew each other very well and who, as they came in, stopped at the tables of their friends to exchange gossip and, more than likely, recipes.

When *that* idea occurred to us, it was time to leave.

— PETER BRAND



REVIEWS

[Editor's Note:

Several reviews scheduled for these pages didn't make the deadline. May is a poor time to begin a review section. We will be grander in the fall.]

FIVE POETS

APPLES FROM SHINAR

by HYAM PLUTZIK. Wesleyan, 1959

WALLS AND DISTANCES

by DAVID GALLER. Macmillan, 1959

SAINT JUDAS

by JAMES WRIGHT. Wesleyan, 1959

LIGHT AND DARK

by BARBARA HOWES. Wesleyan, 1959

A DREAM OF GOVERNORS

by LOUIS SIMPSON. Wesleyan, 1959

Apples from Shinar is a curious book. Its highly intellectual manner and abstract vocabulary make it sound as if it were written between 1925 and 1945:

I have been in many towns and seen innumerable houses,
also rocks, trees, people, stars and insects.

Thieves, like ants, are making off with them,
taking them to your old ant-hill.

Thus you prepare the future for me and my loved ones.

What spider made the machine of many threads?

The threads run from time's instants to all the atoms of the
universe.

In each instant a wheel turns in your head, threads go taut,
and one of a quintillion atoms is transmuted.

Thus you prepare the future for me and my loved ones.

The effect of the very striking concrete image with which Mr. Plut-
zik opens this poem—"As the great horse rots on the hill / till the
stars wink through his ribs"—is soon lost in the vagueness of Whit-

manesque rhetoric, and even aside from the flat refrain, recalling Stephen Spender, it would be difficult to find a poet under forty-five today who would be likely to write in this expansive style.

In addition to Whitman, the influence of Eliot, especially the Eliot of "Gerontion" and the *Four Quartets*, is omnipresent:

... then all times
Are poses of the one actor, Time: he
Who is ape of eternity, and the acorn neglected among
leaves
Encircles, now in this very heartbeat, a forest
Of oaks that have no horizon; and the still white egg
On the tablecloth in the hush of morning is turbulent
With the cackle of a universe of chickens;
And still it is hot noon on the sea Tethys
Where the protoplasmic slime begets Aphrodite
Whose belly is history till the moon falls
And the last spore flames like Andromeda. ("The Zero
That Is All").

As in so many of the poems in this volume, we are here presented with a world of symbols and ideas where nothing seems to exist in its own right, and, as Mr. Plutzik felicitously begins another of his poems, "The illusion is one of flatness."

At least once, in a poem called "Of Objects Considered as Fortresses in a Baleful Space," he seems to be parodying himself:

The nothing is a glitter
Wicked, a frosty water,
Upon which no words scatter,
Not hallo, sob or laughter.

Upon their petty islands
The something and the something,
Knowing or blank, in silence
Await the will of nothing.

One, one, and one,
Mysteries of the moon,
And the always never-guests,
None, none.

But when Mr. Plutzik concretely imagines an actual setting, a local habitation, for his fine frenzies, he can be very effective, as in "The Milkman" or in "The Last Fisherman":

He will set his camp beside a cold lake
And when the great fish leap to his lure, shout high
To three crows battling a northern wind.

As he wrote in another successful poem, "To My Daughter," which could just as well be addressed to his own muse: "You must learn soon, soon, that even love/Can be no shield against the abstract demons," and even his obvious love for his craft can not rescue too large a number of these poems.

David Galler strikes me as a poet who, for all his faults, and they are very obvious in his first volume, *Walls and Distances*, is capable of great development. The power is here, though it is often pretty crude. He habitually overstates and overdramatizes his situations, as, for example, in the opening sonnet of his sequence, *The Estrangement*: "Between us a shape of air heaves/And cowers uncontrollably.... See/How cruel a shadow its fang of light leaves /Upon your face. . . . Look, though! crossing the room, you make it dart/ Immense. . . ." In another poem, written in heroic couplets, "The Poet, Efficient, Reliable, Is Fired from Still Another Job," the effect of Mr. Galler's very real anger is lost and becomes almost comic, and his complete lack of perspective nearly ruins the poem.

Mr. Galler's ear is uncertain, and many of his lines sound ugly and are difficult to read. "And is it not implicit/ That in such nameless rebirths of the spirit /We praise most what augurs not to involve/ Its least facet?/ What we would burn we are hard put to resolve." Or: ". . . On kinaesthesia that calibrates/ Light's angle, surface, refracted heat—/ O intricacies!" Or: "Desireless of duplicating a Lazarus,/ Man twice-risen to mere world." Sometimes he will throw away a perfectly good line just to get in a big, impressive word, as in "Keeping the Cat": ". . . he bunched along the walls /Softly, cut cruelly by supple spears of light/ At five o'clock, blinking, laving, the late/ Gigantomachia of our pride." In a good poem on the New York garment center—the only one I can recall on that unpromising subject—one comes across a line like "In sexuality of gold/I've found antithesis!" Because of his almost unbelievably gritty poetic texture and clumsy lines, often whole poems, *Walls and Distances* is not an easy volume to read, but it is worth struggling with, sometimes plowing through, especially for the sake of poems like "The Execrators," not pleasant but undeniably powerful and impossible to forget. Among other poems which succeed absolutely I would mention "Obloquy of the Vase," with its "mysterious words, lest the couch in the nameless city/ Tilt on grief," "The Wall," written in a long line, very difficult to sustain, and the very beautiful poem which ends the volume, "The Great Dunes Past Point o' Woods:"

All gardens are dust, I thought, broiling Babylon lies
 Thirty miles west;
 Can I, being who I am, prefer this place
 To that which I despise...
 I, thus obsessed,
 The pale dunes bloomed with loneliness, a fanatic grace
 Of mild wind, fair thoughts, blue and vermilion skies.

James Wright is a much more even poet than David Galler, more completely competent. In *Saint Judas*, there is none of the pretentiousness, the spasmodic quality (as it used to be called in the nineteenth century), of *Walls and Distances*, and yet as soon as one reads very much of Mr. Wright, he feels there is something lacking, something we associate with important poetry — strongly marked character, color, vitality, tension, thrust. Mr. Wright's world is a gray one, his rhythms tend to be rather flaccid, and the emotion conveyed is usually loneliness and melancholy. In such a world neither exaltation nor horror can exist, no matter what the subject is. Even when his subject is potentially tragic, as in "The Slackening of the Tide" or "All the Beautiful Are Blameless," both about drownings (Mr. Wright's favorite subject seems to be the sea), there is such a distance between the reader and the tragic event, that all we feel is the peculiar remoteness of the spectator, whose chief complaint is that he can't feel anything: "Lonely for weeping, starved for a sound of mourning," or "The living and the dead glide hand in hand/ Under the cool waters where the days are gone." In several poems, "The Ghost," "The Alarm," "But Only Mine," Mr. Wright either imagines he is dead or is in a state between life and death: "... I, neither the living nor the dead,/ Paused in the dusk of dawn to wonder why/ Any man clambers upward out of shade/ To rake and shovel all his dust away." Associated with this lack of vitality is a certain diffuseness and a facile verbal music:

Lovely the mother shook her hair, so long
 And glittering in its darkness, as the moon
 In the deep lily-heart of the hollowing swells
 Flamed toward the cold caves of the evening sea.

When his effects completely come off, he can strike a delicate elegiac note, something like Matthew Arnold's, as in "Evening," "Paul," "An Offering for Mr. Bluehart," ("The apples all are eaten now."), and "Sparrows in a Hillside Drift":

I lose their words, though winter understands.
 Man is the listener gone deaf and blind.

The oak above us shivers in the bleak
And lucid winter day; and, far below
Our gathering of the cheated and the weak,
A chimney whispers to a cloud of snow.

Yet Mr. Wright can give us poetry of a very different order, as in "Complaint," "Saint Judas" and "A Prayer in My Sickness." They are strong, direct and concentrated:

You hear the long roll of the plunging ground,
The whistle of stones, the quail's cry in the grass.
I stammer like a bird, I rasp like stone,
I mutter, with gray hands upon my face.
The earth blurs, beyond me, into dark.
Spinning in such bewildered sleep, I need
To know you, whirring above me, when I wake.
Come down. Come down. I lie afraid.
I have lain alien in my self so long,
How can I understand love's angry tongue?
(*"A Prayer in My Sickness"*)

When we turn from the neutral tones of James Wright to Barbara Hawes' *Light and Dark*, we enter a different world, a world of bright color, strongly defined objects and, above all, energy. "Now when spiralling summer burns / Its way towards autumn, on this vine/ The morning-glory opens such / Buoyant parasols of blue/ Uplifted into flight, as to / Recover spring." One of her best poems — though it is difficult to pick and choose in such a consistently fine collection — "Danae", begins, "Golden, within this golden hive/ Wild bees drone,/ As if at any moment they may/ Swarm and be gone/ From the arched fibres of their cage/ Lithe as whale bone."

But the energy one feels everywhere in this volume, even in a description of a Persian painting — "See how the tawny hunter/ Barefoot mounts swift, the sky/ Of golden light aglow/ All about the ecstatic tree" — is almost always carefully held under control by sharp, precise observation and an uncanny gift for perfect phrasing. Here is how she sees a group of relatives on a family visit: "Their eyes go out on stalks like crabs' to the closet." She is a master of the sharp contrast, sometimes between successive poems whose impact is somehow increased by their position in the book — "Morning Glory" and "In the Cold Country," "Indian Summer" and "Lament" are on facing pages — and sometimes within the same poem — "Landscape and Figure," "City Afternoon" and "The Nuns Assist at Childbirth." "Only the face and hands creep through/ The shapeless clothing, to remind/ One that a woman lives within/ The wrap-

pings of this strange cocoon./ Her hands reach from these veils of death/ To harvest a child from the raw womb." Even when she is not describing an actual object she can somehow embody it, as in her three pieces on the winds of Southern Europe, "Tramontana", "Sirocco," and "Mistral." An even more impressive achievement is the middle section of *Light and Dark*, "The Triumphs," brilliantly concrete representations of the triumphs of time, chastity, love, death, pride and truth, all evoking Renaissance painting. The same kind of precision in her imagery accounts for the success of "Indian Summer" and "Light and Dark", with its picture of "that beckoning host ahead,/ Inn-keeper Death, [who] has but to lift his hat/ To topple the oldster in the dust."

At first glance Louis Simpson seems to be a much more conventional poet than Barbara Howes, especially if one compares her love poetry to his. Miss Howes characteristically writes: "No one can say/ When love will take root,/ Run wildfire up the heart's trellis . . ." while Mr. Simpson is equally characteristic in the last stanza of "*The Flight to Cytherea*": "And fell into the country of your eyes,/ Since when I have lived comfortably here:/ My thoughts are only clouds in summer skies,/ And everything is perfect, calm and clear." Most of the poems in *A Dream of Governors* are written in very carefully rhymed stanzas, often quatrains, and regular meters, while most of Miss Howes' poems seem much freer, less regular, almost as if she were wary of any kind of preconceived pattern which might get in the way of immediately conveying the sharpness and intensity of her emotions and perceptions.

Mr. Simpson, in addition to being a more traditional poet, seems to be a less personal poet than Miss Howes. The pronoun *we* in a number of his poems replaces the omnipresent *I*, either stated or implied, of Miss Howes' volume, as if he were writing as a spokesman for a whole generation, "The Silent Generation" returned from World War II, rather than as an individual: "It was my generation/ That put the Devil down/ With great enthusiasm./ But now our occupation/ Is gone. Our education / Is wasted on the town." In the second and third sections of this volume, on America and Europe, it is always the representative quality of his experience that is the important thing. And, according to Mr. Simpson, the only significant act left for this generation is a rejection of any sort of public life and its false rhetoric. "Landscape and garden, village of the mind —/ This is man's only state. Here he survives,/ And only in a corner will he find/ His happiness, if any. But our lives/ Are lies of State, the slogans for today./ That wind is carrying the world away."

In the opening poem of the volume, the green shepherd plays on

"his melancholy flute" and "whispers nothings in his lady's ear," on their "magic mountain" where "nothing moved," while the meaningless pageant of western history unfolds itself to its ultimate end when "The dragon rises crackling in the air,/ And who is god but Dagon? Wings careen,/ Rejoicing, on the Russian hemisphere." But the dragon itself in "A Dream of Governors," a superb parable, is a creation of the mad governors of this world. Even Heinrich, the SS guard of the ultimate nightmare, the concentration camp, wishes he were a bird: "Uch wünscht, ich wäre ein Vöglein,"/ Sings Heinrich, 'I would fly/ Across the sea,' so sadly/ It makes his children cry." In such a world "strange dreams occur,/ For dreams are licensed as they never were."

It should be clear from the above quotations that Mr. Simpson is one of the best craftsmen writing today. It is impossible to find a weak or slovenly poem in this volume, and he can write single lines which are hard to forget: "There are designs in curtains that can kill,/ Insidious intentions in a chair;/ In conversation, silence, sitting still,/ The demon of decorum and despair," or "The evening, like a millionaire,/ Is glittering, expansive, calm." And yet the beautifully wrought surface can sometimes get in the way of the expressive power of the poem, as it does in the almost Tennysonian "Orpheus in the Underworld." "Night, dark night, night of my distress—/ Once by the Mediterranean in May/ I heard a nightingale, and the sadness of roses/ In the murmuring wind, but this was sadder than they."

In "The Runner," a long narrative poem of almost thirty pages, over one third of this volume, Mr. Simpson proves, and some of it sounds like a kind of demonstration, that he can write a very different kind of poetry. Here he decisively leaves his "landscape and garden, village of the mind," to enter the world of actuality, rather than the characteristic dreams, visions or nightmares of his other poems, and writes in remarkably plain blank verse. The story progresses from the opening to its purposely inconclusive end through a straight-forward, objective narrative, and not, as has been characteristic of most narrative poetry of the last forty years, through the associations in the mind of the leading character. In addition, Mr. Simpson has intentionally avoided any kind of myth: "This is the story of a soldier in the 101st. Airborne Division of the Army of the United States," and the simple, factual statements of the foreword set the tone for the whole work. Even the name of the hero is just his name: Dodd is not supposed to suggest God or any other mythological hero, and the whole poem depends on straight narration and description, not metaphor. Indeed the metaphors are sometimes so tame they verge on triteness: "The glider leveled, lightly/

Bumped on the ground, and rolled to a dead stop./ The door was open. They were climbing through./ And now were standing in an open field/ Flat as a pancake." A little further on they see a wind-mill, "The land was crossed with dykes./ It looked like a Dutch painting," for they are now in Holland. And yet some of the descriptive passages are very striking. "Sometimes the snow came drifting down again./ And when it ceased, eddies and gusts of wind/ Would lift it in long skirts that swept across/ The dead. It packed into the stiffened folds/ Of clothing. When night fell, a freezing wind/ Encased the tree-trunks in bright sheathes of ice/ And hung bright icicles on every branch,/ And clamped the dead in rigid attitudes." But all the descriptive details are always, as in any successful narrative, an organic part of the whole poem, which is Dodd's experience of the Second World War, and that experience solidly communicated. Here is a serious attempt to regain for poetry some of the territory lost to prose fiction during the Nineteenth Century.

THE LAW AND THE PROFITS

By C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON
Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960

Professor C. Northcote Parkinson promulgated his second law in his second book of essays, *The Law and the Profits*, leaving him only eight more to go to match the long-standing record in this field. Given Mr. Parkinson's wit, and his chosen subject matter—human pretense and stupidity, there is little doubt that he shall soon be the champion law-giver of all time. Mr. Parkinson, ably assisted by the illustrations of Robert C. Osborn, has given substance ("It spends and therefore is") and names ("Abominable No-Men," "The Administration Block") as well as laws ("Expenditures rise to meet income," and "Work expands to fill the time available") to our deepest phobias and darkest suspicions about the lunacies of contemporary society, the nightmares of sane men surrounded by idiots. Professor Parkinson has recently accepted an appointment in the Department of Political Science at the University of Illinois. His next book will undoubtedly be his best.

OWEN JENKINS

THE NOBLE SAVAGE—A Meridian Periodical. Issue No. 1, \$1.50. Editors Saul Bellow, Keith Botsford, Jack Ludwig.

THE DIAL—published by The Dial Press. Issues 1 and 2. \$1.50. Editor James H. Silberman.

Last fall I lost my head and drove to Iowa City with a colleague to catch up on the contemporary literary scene (*Esquire* had moved in there for a weekend, along with Ralph Ellison, Dwight Macdonald, Mark Harris and Norman Mailer), and to bring Iowa City the hot news that *The Carleton Miscellany* was about to begin. I was cooled off fast, you bet, by meeting, in a motel room, representatives of two other new magazines, *The Dial* and *The Noble Savage*. I hadn't figured *The Carleton Miscellany* would have literature all to itself (except for *Esquire*), but I hadn't figured to be ganged up on either. If one motel room was like this, what was New York like? One does, I decided, get out of touch in Northfield.

We drove back from Iowa City and I got pneumonia. Then we pressed on hard through the winter and the spring, rejecting manuscripts, mailing out copies, endorsing checks, paying bills. Sometimes we'd go for a whole week without giving that motel room any time, but then we'd remember it again and I'd get a cold.

I have a cold now as a matter of fact. I've just been reading *The Dial* and *The Noble Savage*, both of which have, I guess, some nice things. There's a poem in *The Noble Savage* by Nemerov (why didn't he send it to us?) and a nice piece by Ralph Ellison (luckily too long for us). And in *The Dial* there's a fine piece by Vance Bourjaily (I guess he hadn't heard of us). I just can't seem to shake the cold. And colds aren't my only trouble either; I've been getting a nasty stomach bug every week or so thinking about the big, fat publishing houses behind these big, fat, padded magazines. It's been an unhealthy winter in Northfield.

But I don't want you to think for a moment that I am writing this review with any malice in my heart. Viewed perfectly objectively, these new magazines appear to me to be really fairly respectable, sophisticated, city-type publications for the most part and I certainly wish each of them a long run. Indeed I was absolutely shocked to read the malicious review of *The Dial* which appeared not long ago in that propaganda sheet, *The New Republic*. I hope nobody will do that for *The Noble Savage*. I'll grant that I read the worst story and the worst essay that I have ever read in *The Noble Savage*, and I didn't like the mannered *Arias* in it either, or the slap-dash dream poems by Berryman, or the nonsense about middlebrows by Harold Rosenberg (that all made me feel better); but I think it would be most unfair to pick on the magazine for

these minor early flaws, or for its title (which, lord knows, is the most inappropriate title ever chosen for such a sheet).

Not to change the subject, we got a fan letter from Massachusetts recently in which we were criticized for talking about ourselves too much. It said we were a clique, said we were incestuous, said we were mannered, said we tasted like stale beer. US, mind you!

But my sickness begins to mend. I'm happy to report that with this issue, at this instant, we have a clear, undisputable edge. We have printed three issues to *The Dial's* two, *The Noble Savage's* one. We have printed 336 cultural pages to *The Dial's* 288, *The Noble Savage's* measley 256. And so in *all* earnestness I say to both these hot shots, Best of Luck.

RW

THE PARTY AT CRANTON

By JOHN W. ALDRIDGE

David McKay Company, Inc., 1960

At almost the same instant that the gigantic howl rose in the room, Richard Waithe sensed its source and so remained for that instant the only person present not absolutely shocked out of his wits. He had in fact time enough while the others were registering surprise, dismay and even something like panic—for when people came to a party at Cranton, they did not expect anything to happen—to let the thought touch his mind that, had he been one of those strenuously clever writers who begins novels with sentences like “Her face wore the mildly astonished look of an artificially inseminated cow,” he . . .

—from pg. 1, “The Party at Cranton”

At almost the same instant that the first page, glowing in the dim light of an annoyingly March-like April evening, confronted him with its wintry verbal windiness, inwardness and emptiness, he was seized with a fatal compulsion—not unlike that which had seized him as a child when, at an adult party, he had turned the cigaret of a distinguished and loquacious visitor around so that, in mid-sentence, he had lurched drunkenly and wordlessly from his chair in wild surmise—a compulsion to do what he knew better than to do (particularly in such an instance, when it had been done and overdone more times than he could possibly count), a compulsion, that is, briefly, to parody the blasted thing. But no, he said to him-

self, *this* would be unworthy of him (himself), unworthy and, worse, dangerous since, after reading further, he was not sure that the words before him which were, as it were, *driving* him to parody were not in themselves parody, in which case *his* parody would be a johnny-come-lately. But if they *were* parody?

He read on.

And on.

And when, with the evening full upon him and the darkness buffeting the windows of his disturbed mind and rented room, he reached page fifty-eight, he decided that while it was not parody it was also not parodiable since it was doing in earnest all, absolutely all, that the parodist *would* do if the parodist undertook to parody that which this author was, it was finally clear, *not* parodying but cultivating, though for the obscurest of reasons. And why were the reasons obscure? Because the author, while clearly angry at the excesses of a literary world at which he perhaps had occasion to be angry, had chosen, as his vehicle to convey contempt for that world, a language so unutterably *of* that world that his criticism swept back upon itself like, one might say, a well-aimed kick by the right rear foot against the left front foot of the one and same artificially inseminated cow, *thus*:

Buchanan therefore adopted the expedient which in Waithe's fanciful view had served him so well in the case of Cran-ton: he simply got himself pregnant by the right authorities and sat down and gave birth to a literary magazine. He christened it *The Cranton Review*, and after soliciting sufficient funds from these same authorities to insure its proper start in life, he proclaimed himself its only begetter and chief editor, quite as if he had got it in a test tube direct from the loins of Fate. It was from the beginning a tiresomely pompous, overbearing little braggart of a review, the spitting image of its parent. In earliest infancy it showed symptoms of having inherited the family disease of acute oral narcissism, and since it was far more heavily endowed than subscribed to, it could afford to make a career out of talking to itself—which it thenceforth did.

—pgs. 57-58

O inward! inward! And so he (that is, the reviewer in his rented room, with darkness upon him) decided that *if* a review were to be written which would rise properly to the occasion, it would have itself to be inward, narcissistic, taking as its first principle the principle (if it was a principle) of non-parody parody, that is, of saying quite seriously something about the book in question but of saying

it in such a way that only the very cleverest of readers—and perhaps not they either—would understand that this was *not* parody (though it was) but deadly serious. And so he . . .

ERNEST LEVERETT

(Continued on page 112)

around, I think, but not in the crude sense suggested in the first paragraph.

This magazine is edited upon the assumption that a magazine has to be edited (that is, cannot be run by a committee composed of one poet, one scientist, one philosopher and one Yale man), and that the limitations of the editors go with the magazine even as Mr. Luce's do (this is not to approve of Mr. Luce). With these reservations we would like to point out what is perhaps obvious in principle but certainly obscure (so far) in our practice, that we are not delighted by our limitations, by our literary inwardness. We therefore look to the outside for help. For three issues we have rushed into print, partly to persuade ourselves that we are really launched, and partly to fit what we call a quarterly into the academic year. The rush has pushed us back upon our immediate resources and has made our magazine more English-Department provincial than we would like it to be. Now, though, I hope, we can slow down over the summer

and begin to look interested (as we are) in becoming a magazine of General Culture, Broad Horizons and even Integrative Knowledge. We'll not get very broad, and we'll certainly not integrate at the rate most foundations would like us to—but we might, for example, with the right help, be able to print a good historical-social-economical-anthropological-scientific-moral essay some day—or even an essay dealing with only *one* of these fields.

Any other points? I should add what I hope by now is obvious, that we welcome manuscripts from Carleton faculty members, students and alumnae, but we also welcome and need manuscripts from outside. We prefer manuscripts that are typed (double-spaced) on some fairly recent, fairly heavy paper. Our rejection slips are on scraps, however, and are mostly illegible, on the theory that rejection slips, unlike manuscripts, don't need to be read. Manuscripts, when accepted, will be paid for upon publication.

RW

"After 1920 a number of important periodicals turned up.... The most important in America were *The Dial* ...and *The Hound and Horn*, a smug and pontifical 'Harvard Miscellany'..."

—Robert E. Knoll: *Robert McAlmon, Expatriate Writer & Publisher*, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1959, pg. 22.

"Miscellanists are the most popular writers among every people; for it is they who form a communication between the learned and the unlearned, and, as it were, throw a bridge between those two great divisions of the public."

—Isaac D'Israeli.